



FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

By

PANDIT JANKI NATH KACHROO

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1.0 BRIBE DISCOVERED

In olden times sovereigns were the fountain heads of justice in their lands with no codified laws at hand, no works of Jurisprudence to guide and no prescribed procedures to follow. The dispenser of justice had to rely on his intelligence, observation, wit and integrity to give impartial judgments.

History is replete with examples how fair judgments have been delivered time and again. One such episode belongs to the reign of the King, Yasaskara (939- 948 AD).

There lived a wealthy citizen (name not known) during Yasaskara's reign. Somehow bad luck struck him and he became a pauper. To pay off his debts, he sold off all his property including his mansion but excluding a well with a ladder, attached to the house to a rich merchant. This well would fetch rent sufficient to sustain his wife. Leaving her at a secure place and thinking that she had an assured source of income, he went abroad in search of employment.

After a pretty long time, this man returned with a small fortune. To his utter dismay and disbelief, he found his wife working as a maid in a household. On enquiry, he was told by his wife that the merchant had turned her out forcibly and had denied her the rent from the well, saying that he had bought that too. The shocked man approached many a judge. His claim was rejected by all on the ground that there was documentary proof of his having sold the well too. The frustrated man resorted to Prayopavas - fast unto death.

The King, Yasaskara was known for his just and benevolent rule. The matter was brought to his notice by the concerned officials. The fasting man was presented to the king. The disappointed complainant related the whole story. The King commanded that the merchant and all the judges be called. A court was held with the king presiding. The complainant repeated the whole story. The judges who had heard him earlier opined that the man had no claim worthy of consideration in the face of the records of the officer-in-charge of Registration of Deeds. The King was not convinced, but could not find any reason or grounds to refute the judges. He did not commit and pretended lack of interest in the case.

The king did not dissolve the court but began to talk casually about the dresses and diamonds that the councillors were wearing. This was just to divert their attention. He pointed to the ring that the merchant was wearing. He expressed his desire to examine it closely. The merchant handed over the ring to the king, who suddenly stood up and walked out to another apartment, asking the audience to wait until he returned.

The king sent secretly a messenger to the merchant's house with instructions to show the ring as a token to his accountant and ask him to send immediately the account book of the period pertaining to the execution of the Deed. The accountant sent the relevant account book. The king examined it and noticed that 1000 Dinnaras had been paid to the official recorder (Registrar) on that particular date. The die was cast. The official was called forthwith. The king went back to the waiting councillors, the merchant and the complainant. The court was resumed. The king showed the account book to the councillors and convinced the judges and others that the official recorder was eligible to receive a very small amount legally for registering the Deed. The rest of the huge money was paid as a bribe to the

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official to interpolate 'sa' (lk) (together) in place of 'ra' (jk) (without) in the deed. The merchant confessed.

The king had not only the well but the whole house restored to the plaintiff. The merchant was suitably punished.

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2.0 AFGHAN RULE IN KASHMIR

By **M.K.Raina**



The period from 1752 to 1819 AD is considered the darkest period in the history of Kashmir. This was the time when Afghans ruled Kashmir and unleashed a reign of terror on the Kashmiri people, especially the Kashmiri Pandits. Under persecution, most of the KPs migrated to places outside Kashmir. Those who stayed back, were either forcibly converted to Islam or ruthlessly killed. It is said that only 11 KP families survived death.

How did Afghans take over the reigns of Kashmir?

According to Prof. Somnath Dhar, the death of Aurangzeb spelled the disintegration of the Mughal empire. The later Mughals, embroiled in internal dissensions, hardly cared for Kashmiris. Governors appointed by the Mughal emperors would nominate deputies to carry on administration on their behalf. Hindus and Shias were persecuted in the one-year regime of one such nominee Mir Ahmed Khan. Things came to a head with Ahmed Shah Abdali establishing supremacy over Afghanistan and making successful forays into north-western India. In 1753, he established Afghan rule in Kashmir. P.N.K.Bamzai adds: 'While back at Lahore (after his struggle with Muin-ul-Mulk, the governor of Punjab in 1751 when Ahmad Shah Abdali over ran the province and also entered into a treaty with emperor Ahmad for ceding Punjab and Multan to Afghanistan), Ahmad Shah Abdali received an invitation from the leaders of Kashmir to rid the kingdom of cruel governors of the decadent Mughal emperors, and bring it directly under his rule. He sent a strong force of Afghans under his lieutenant Ishk Aqasi on this mission, who after overcoming stiff resistance put up by the Mughal forces in Kashmir, annexed the territory to the expanding kingdom of Abdali.'

Walter R. Lawrence writes: 'As the Mughal empire began to decay, the subahs in Kashmir became independent and high-handed, and in the reign of the emperor Muhammad Shah, the Hindus were greatly oppressed by Abdul Gani and Mulla Sharf-ud-din. Kalashpura, a Hindu ward of the city was set on fire and the Hindus were forbidden to wear turbans. In this reign, the subahs fought among themselves and Kashmir fell into wild disorder. By the year AD 1751, the office of subah of Kashmir appears to have become hereditary and practically independent of Delhi. Then the unfortunate valley passed into the hands of new masters and Kashmir became subject to the Pathan rule, the cruellest and worst of all.'

Pathan governors were known for their savagery and inhuman treatment of Kashmiris in general, and Pandits in particular. Says Forster, "During my residence in Kashmir, I often witnessed the harsh treatment which the common people received at the hands of their masters, who rarely issued an order without a blow of the side of their hatchet, a common weapon of the Afghans. (The) extreme rigour has sensibly affected the deportment and manners of Kashmirians who shrink with dread from the Afghan oppression."

The first Afghan chief to rule Kashmir was Abdullah Khan Isk Aquasi (1753-54). He lined up all the rich Kashmiris and ordered them to part with their wealth or face death. He extracted one crore rupees from the local merchants. It is said that some traders committed suicide because of his torture. J.L.Kilam has this to say about Isk Aquasi: "Aqasi did not stay in Kashmir for more than six months, but even during this short period, he made the ruin of the country complete and left no stone unturned in giving the people a correct idea of what the future would be like. The houses of the poor and rich alike were plundered. Huge fines were imposed on the people. Their property was pillaged without mercy, and those people who incurred his displeasure, were murdered most brutally."

About Afghan rule in general, Walter R. Lawrence writes: 'When we pass from the Mughal period to the period of the Shahani Durani, we pass to a time of brutal tyranny, unrelieved by good works, chivalry and honour. Men with interest were appointed as governors who wrung as much money as they could out of the wretched people of the valley. Amir Khan Jawan Sher was perhaps the best of Pathan rulers, for at least he built the Amira Kadal bridge and the palace of Shergarhi, but on the other hand he showed petty spite in destroying the Mughal gardens on the Dal. Other Pathan rulers are now only remembered for their brutality and cruelty and it is said of them that they thought no more of cutting off heads than of plucking a flower.'

Regarding the miscalculation on part of the Kashmiris in inviting Afghans to rule Kashmir, PNK Bamzai writes: 'Their (Afghan's) rule reduced the Valley to the lowest depths of penury, degradation and slavery. While inviting the Afghans to take over the administration of the Valley, the Kashmiri nobles had mistaken them for a branch of the civilised and humane Mughal emperors of India. They had hoped that after the break up of the central Mughal power, Ahmad Shah Abdali and his successors would give them a stable administration. Little did they imagine that all the beauty and nobility, for which Kashmir and its people were famous, would be wiped off under their rule.'

Jagmohan has this to say about the invitation extended to Afghan rulers: 'Those who invited Ahmad Shah Abdali did not realise that they were really calling a barbarous horde to their garden of nature. The unfortunate people virtually jumped from the frying pan into the fire. And 67 years of brutal Afghan rule caused them untold miseries.'

During Afghan rule, there was a custom among the Pandits to send alongwith the bridegroom, another boy, called 'Pot Maharaza' who would also be dressed like the groom. In case some untoward event happened to the bridegroom, the 'Pot Maharaza' would immediately take his place. It is widely believed that the custom was introduced under stress because in the Pathan times, it was not uncommon for the bridegroom to be seized as he went to wed his bride.

How cruel were Afghans and how they tortured and brutally killed people in general and Pandits in particular? According to Lawrence, the victims of these fiends (Pathan rulers) were the Pandits, the Shias and the Bombas of the Jhelum valley. First in the rank of oppressors, comes Assad Khan who boasted that the savage Nadir Shah was his prototype. It was his practice to tie up the Pandits, two and two, in grass sacks and sink them in the Dal lake. As an amusement, a pitcher filled with ordure would be placed on a Pandit's head

and Musalmans would pelt the pitcher with stones till it broke, the unfortunate Hindu being blinded with filth. Mir Hazar was another fiend who used leather bags instead of grass sacks for the drowning of Brahmans. He drowned Shias and Brahmans indiscriminately. A locality on the bank of Dal lake is still called Bata Mazar, the 'Graveyard of Pandits'. PNK Bamzai describes the terror unleashed by Afghans on Kashmiris like this: 'Rude was the shock that the Kashmiris got when they witnessed the first acts of barbarity at the hands of their new masters. Abdullah Khan Ishk Aqasi let loose a reign of terror as soon as he entered the Valley. Accustomed to looting and murdering the subjected people, his soldiers set themselves to amassing riches by the foulest means possible. The well-to-do merchants and noblemen of all communities were assembled together in the palace and ordered to surrender all their wealth on pain of death.' According to PNK Bamzai, those who had the audacity to complain or to resist (the Afghan brutality) were quickly despatched with the sword and in many cases, their families suffered the same fate. Red hot iron bars were applied to the body of a rich Muslim nobleman, Jalil by name. Another, Qazi Khan had to pay an enormous fine of a lakh of rupees, but suspecting that he had not surrendered his all, his son was put to such physical torture that he ended his life by drowning himself in the river.

The kind of torture inflicted on Pandits, as narrated by Lawrence, explains the savage mentality of these fiends. 'Atta Mohd. Khan was a ferocious libertine and his agent, an old woman named Koshib, was the terror of Brahman parents, who rather than allow the degradation of their daughters, destroyed their beauty by shaving their heads or cutting their noses.'

During the Afghan rule, 'Jazia', the poll tax imposed on Pandits, which was earlier remitted by the great king Zain-ul-Abidin, was revived. In those days, it is said that a Muslim, on seeing a Pandit, would jump on his back and take a ride. During the rule of Raja Sukh Jiwan, who asserted his independence from the Kabul in 1754 with the aid of Abdul Hassan Bandey, the Kashmiris enjoyed a brief respite. Sukh Jiwan's career ended in 1762 when Ahmad Shah Abdali sent Nur-ud-Din Bamzai to overthrow him. Sukh Jiwan was captured by Afghan forces and presented before Nur-ud-din Khan, who ordered him to be blinded. In this miserable condition, Sukh Jiwan was carried to Lahore where Ahmad Shah got him trampled to death under the feet of an elephant. Nur-ud-din however returned to Kabul after a year and handed over the administration of Kashmir to Buland Khan Bamzai.

Nur-ud-din Khan Bamzai was again deputed to rule Kashmir in 1764. He appointed Pandit Kailash Dhar, a leading noble of Kashmir as revenue collector. Another noble man Mir Muqim Kanth, whom Nur-ud-din Khan had appointed as his Dewan and whose relations with Kailash Dhar got strained due to their rivalry at the court, induced Khan to force the Pandit to make the payment of stipulated revenue on the daily basis as against monthly basis. This put Kailash Dhar in a difficult situation and at this time, Mir Muqim Kanth was murdered. Kailash Dhar's hand was suspected to be in the murder and to make a clear case, Mir Muqim's relatives produced manipulated proofs against him. Nur-ud-din Khan however did not implicate Kailash Dhar in the conspiracy. Mir Muqim's son Faqir Ullah, not being able to have his grievances redressed at the hands of Nur-ud-din, fled the Valley, with a strong vendetta against Kailash Dhar and his family.

Lal Khan Khattak, a jagirdar of Biru Pargana, attacked governor Jan Muhammad Khan's forces in 1765, defeated him and proclaimed his independence. He let loose his orgy of terror on the Kashmiris, especially the Pandits. He put the members to sword or got them drowned in Dal lake, looted their valuables and thus wiping family after family. Shias also suffered during his time, when it is said, one Hafiz Abdullah, a Shia by faith, was beheaded by a leading Qazi on the allegation that he was propagating the doctrines of his religion disguised as a Sunni. Lal Khan was replaced by another governor Khurram Khan in 1766 who appointed Kailash Dhar as his chief minister.

Faqir Ullah Kanth, who had taken refuge with Raja Muhammad Khan Bomba at Muzaffarabad, induced him to make a bid for the throne in Kashmir. The Bomba chief, carrying his forces to the Valley, out-manoeuvred Khurram Khan with his strategies, as also the superstition of an inauspicious omen seized him (Khurram Khan) and he ordered his forces to retreat. After making a junction with the followers of Lal Khan Khattak at Biru, the Bombas marched into Srinagar. Khurram and Kailash Dhar fled to Kabul and the city fell into the hands of Faqir Ullah Khan and his Bomba supporters. PNK Bamzai writes: 'For a week, the furious Bombas, the traditional enemies of Kashmiris, satiated their thirst for murder and arson on the poor citizens. Shrieks of orphaned children and the wailing of old and infirm women rent the sky. For weeks, the streets of Srinagar emitted nauseating odour from putrefied bodies.'

In order to avenge the murder of his father, Faqir Ullah Khan who ruled the Valley for one year (1767), slew a large number of leading Hindus and forcibly converted 2000 Hindus to Islam. To escape Khan's fury, many left Kashmir leading to a fresh mass exodus of Pandits to the plains of India. PNK Bamzai adds: 'Faqir Ullah Khan, like his predecessors threw off the allegiance to Abdali. And then he gave himself up freely to wine and women under the influence of which, he issued the most cruel orders. A Tyrant as he was, he took special pleasure in perpetrating the most heinous acts. On a trivial provocation, he got his maternal uncle trampled to death under the feet of a horse. No wonder that nearly half the population of Kashmir left the terror-stricken land for good.'

During the governorship of Haji Karim Dad Khan (1776-83), Kashmir entered into the darkest period of its history. He perpetrated untold cruelties on the Kashmiri people during his seven years of rule. He levied numerous taxes and reduced the populace to utter poverty. For the sake of sheer pleasure, he got the numberless Kashmiris drowned in the Dal lake.

Regarding continued oppression of the people at the hands of Haji Karim Dad Khan, PNK Bamzai writes: 'The thirst for blood and money induced Haji Karim Dad Khan to commit the basest acts on the Kashmir people. Without consideration of caste and creed, he levied numerous unjust and killing taxes which resulted in complete impoverishment of the People. The rich jagirdars and nobles had to pay a tax called Nazrana, which amounted to four and even six times their income. The traders and shopkeepers had to pay Zari Ashkhas, a sort of levy on goods imported into or exported from the Valley. The farmers had to pay an enormous tax on their produce, and in order to meet the remorseless demands of the tax gatherers, the peasants cut down all the fruit growing trees in the villages, selling them as

firewood. Within a month, the whole Valley was denuded of its fruit wealth. Haji Karim Dad took special pleasure in inventing new and novel methods of levying taxes. Once, for example, he purposely kept the tax gatherers, Aslam and Babu in hiding, accusing the Pandit community of their murder. He collected their leading members and keeping them in close confinement, subjected them to suffocating fumes from cowdung. The heartless Haji would not release them until they agreed to pay an annual tax Zari Dood of fifty thousand rupees. He also imposed a heavy tax on Kashmiri shawl trade, innovating the system of Dag Shawl or excise tax on shawls, which later on became such a heavy burden on the poor shawl weavers that they preferred death to the weaver's profession.'

Karim Dad Khan died in the year 1783, paving the way for his 18 year old son Azad Khan to take the chair. Azad Khan (1783-85) proved to be more ruthless than his father. He instilled such a terror into his courtiers that they used to tremble before him. In order to end the menace of marauding raids of Khakha and Bomba chiefs of Muzaffarabad into the Valley, Azad Khan collected together an efficient and experienced army, and ordered a host of Kashmiris to collect and carry provisions for them, free of any wages. This forced the peasants to leave their fields unattended, which resulted in a severe famine and heavy toll of human life due to starvation.

Azad Khan committed suicide in 1785, when Islam Khan, Madad Khan's general tried to capture him alive to be produced before Timur Shah, who was thirsty for the revenge of execution of his generals by Azad Khan.

Giving an account of the enormity of crimes committed by Haji Karim Dad Khan and his son Azad Khan against Kashmiris, Forester, who visited Kashmir valley in 1783, writes: ' Though the Kashmirians exclaim with bitterness at the administration of Haji Karim Dad, who was notorious for his wanton cruelties and insatiable avarice often, for trivial offences throwing the inhabitants, tied by the back in pairs, into the river, plundering their property, and forcing their women of every description; yet they say he was systematical tyrant, and attained his purpose, however atrocious, through a fixed medium. They hold a different language in speaking of the son, whom they denominate the Zaulim Khan, a Persian phrase which expresses a tyrant without discernment; and if the smallest portion of the charges against him are true, the application is fitly bestowed. At the age of 18 years, he has few of the vices of youth; he is not addicted to the pleasures of Haram, nor to wine, he does not even smoke the hukha. But his acts of ferocity exceed common belief; they would seem to originate in the wildest caprice and to display a temper, rarely seen in the nature of man. While he was passing with his court under one of the wooden bridges of the city, on which a crowd of people had assembled to observe the procession, he levelled his musket at an opening, which he saw in the pathway, and being an expert marksman, he shot to death an unfortunate spectator. George Forster, an officer of the East India Company, recounts the story about Asad Khan, that was current at that time: 'A film on one of his eyes had baffled the attempts of many operators, and being impassioned at the want of success, he told the last surgeon who he had called in, that if the disorder was not remedied within a limited time, allowing but few days, his belly should be cut open; the man failed in the cure and Azad Khan verified his threat. Azad Khan had in the first three months of his government,

become an object of such terror to the Kashmirians, that the casual mention of his name produced an instant horror and an involuntary supplication of the aid of their Prophet.'

Next to step in was Madad Khan. He tried to alleviate the people's sufferings, but the mischievous elements among the officials, started their old game of intrigue and poisoned his ears against the masses. Being enraged, he let loose an orgy of repression and cruelty on his enemies, which in certain cases outdid the acts of his predecessors. Madad Khan was succeeded by Mirdad Khan (1786-88). He appointed Mulla Guffar Khan as the collector of revenue, with whom, he soon entered into a conflict. The gulf between the two widened and not foreseeing any reconciliation between the two, Nishan Khan Durani, Timur Shah's trusted minister whom he had sent to Valley to take stock of the situation, declared that the one who undertook to pay the highest revenue to the Kabul treasury would be accepted as the governor. Mirdad Khan, on providing such undertaking, continued as the governor, but to fulfil his undertaking, he levied enormous taxes and resorted to extortion. After two years of severe rule, Mirdad Khan died.

On the death of Timur Shah in 1793, his son Zaman Shah occupied the throne at Kabul. Mir Hazar Khan, the governor of Kashmir at that time, took advantage of Timur Shah's death and declared his independence. He even imprisoned his father Mirza Khan, who was sent by Zaman Shah to advise his son against taking such step.

Hazar Khan acted right in the footsteps of his tyrannical predecessors. He let loose a reign of terror against Shias and Pandits. Thousands of innocent Pandits tied up back to back in pairs, were once more thrown into the Dal lake. The unfortunate victims' survivors could only wail and cry in distress, without any effect on the ruler.

Jagmohan writes: 'Ruthless exactions and violent suppression were inherent in the attitude of the Afghans. And they went all out to break the will of the people to resist. The Kashmiris were so much subdued that in the latter part of their rule, the Afghans could hold the entire Valley with just 3000 soldiers. In the beginning, they required at least 20,000 soldiers.'

Another Afghan governor, Ata Muhammad Khan had earned notoriety for his insatiable lust for beautiful Kashmiri women. The Hindu parents became so apprehensive that they had the good looks of their girls sullied to evade the attention of the governor's agents.

Jabar Khan was the last Afghan governor to rule Kashmir in 1819. He persecuted the Pandits relentlessly. It is said that he once wanted to test the common notion among Pandits that snow falls invariably on the night of Shivratri. He ordered Pandits to observe this festival in June-July instead of February-March. It so happened that even on this night there was a snowfall, rendering the atmosphere very cold. Jabar Khan ruled Kashmir for only four months.

Tired of persecution by Afghans, Mirza Pandit Dhar and his son Birbal Dhar secretly persuaded Maharaja Ranjit Singh to annex Kashmir. In July 1819, Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent his forces under the command of Misser Diwan Chand, Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, Sardar Hari Singh, Jwala Singh Padania, Hukum Singh and others. A fierce battle ensued at the top of Pir Panjal and the plateau of Shopian where Afghans were defeated. Jabar Khan hastily fled to Kabul after being wounded in the battle. Thus came an end to the Afghan rule,

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and Kashmir, after a long period of about 5 centuries, passed again from the Mohammadan rule to Hindu rule.

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3.0 SELECTING A SUCCESSOR

Kashmir was ruled by Kshemgupta from 950-958 AD. He was the son of Parvagupta who had secured the throne by treachery after the death of Yasakara. His rule was insignificant. However, his marriage with Didda influenced the history of Kashmir during following centuries.

Didda was the daughter of Simharaja, the chief of Lohara. According to Stein, Lohara comprised the hilly districts immediately adjoining the Kashmir valley on the south-west and now a part of Poonch. Didda was a dashing and dominating personality. She was a bundle of contradiction in her character. She was cruel, suspicious, and licentious, yet she possessed statesman like sagacity, political wisdom and administrative ability. She was always dominating whatever her role. As a queen consort she so dominated the government that the people nicknamed the King as "DiddaKshema". As regent of her son, Abhimanyu (958-972) she ruled with a heavy hand. She eliminated by means fair or foul all whose loyalty she suspected. Those included the grandsons of Pravagupta. After the death of her son, she seems to have been overwhelmed by her lust for power. As regent of her grandsons, Nandigupta (971-973 AD), Tribhuvan (973-975 AD) and Bhimagupta (975-981), in succession, she destroyed each by witchcraft, torture or poison as soon as she suspected they had realised her misdeeds and misconduct. Finally Didda ruled as sovereign from 981-1003, as ruthlessly as ever.

It was, therefore, widely feared that after her death, there would be chaos and stampede for succession, as she had spared none in the royal lineage as a legal claimant. Civil war and bloodshed was expected to settle the matter. But some elderly people had the faith in the ability of Didda to find a way and avoid a blood bath. Events that followed proved them right and also proved the shrewdness of the lady with an iron hand. In spite of all the defects in her character, she remained to the last in possession of the Kashmir throne, and was able to bequeath it to her family in undisputed succession.

Didda had a large number of nephews, all young boys. She decided to nominate one of them as heir apparent. But whom and how? She did not like to make an arbitrary choice. She was keen that none of her nephews got any reason to believe that they were ignored, nor did she like any of her brothers to feel that she was partial. She wanted to ensure unity in the family of her parents to have any discord before power would flow to them. She played a master game.

She called all of them and also placed a heap of apples before them. She told them that she would see how many could each pick. There was a scramble among the youngsters. She noticed that Sangramraja, son of her brother Udayraja, had picked up not only the largest number, but was quite unhurt. She asked him how had he succeeded in getting so many, he replied that while remaining aloof from the scramble he had induced the other boys to do so and in the fighting that ensued he had picked up the fruits with ease. On hearing this, that adept in statecraft, Didda considered him the wisest and fittest of them all. She selected

him her successor and nominated him as the heir apparent. Thus the throne passed on to the Lohara Dynasty.

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4.0 KASHMIR - JUNE 1947 TO OCTOBER 1947

Pains of Procastination

4.1 The State as on 15th August 1947

Jammu and Kashmir was the largest of the princely states in territorial extent and the most diverse in cultural terms. It was also very strategically located. It shared its borders with Tibet (720 Kms.), Sinkiang (640 Kms.), Afghanistan (256 Kms.) and the newly born Pakistan in August 1947 (1120 Kms.) besides India. The state was ruled by a Hindu Maharaja Hari Singh, and had an overall Muslim majority. However, demographic distribution was as varied as its cultural diversity. Kashmir valley had predominantly Muslim population, Hindus (Kashmiri Pandits) and Sikhs forming significant minorities. All spoke Kashmiri. Hindus were in majority in eastern Jammu and Muslims in western Jammu. All spoke Dogri. Ladakh was predominantly Buddhist populated area, linguistically close to Tibet. West of Ladakh was dominated by Shia Muslims speaking Balti. To further north lay Gilgit, mostly Muslim populated, speaking varied dialects. A strip running close to Pakistan border, comprised Muzaffarabad district, Poonch, Rajouri and Mirpur. The population here was mostly Muslims, with sizeable Hindus and Sikhs speaking a variant of Hindustani, close in identity to people on the other side of the border.

National Conference (NC) under the leadership of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah, was the most popular political party in the State. Ideologically, it was close to Indian National Congress. Ghulam Abbas, a non-Kashmiri speaking Mirpurian was the President of Muslim Conference. It had some presence in Mirpur and Poonch. National Conference had launched Quit Kashmir Movement in 1946. R.C.Kak was the Prime Minister. The government came down on the people with a heavy hand. The Indian National Congress (INC), particularly Jawahar Lal Nehru extended support to the people when they were under suppression. The State, though overwhelmingly Muslim populated was not affected by the Two Nation theory of the Muslim League and, therefore, was free from communal tensions when rest of the country was in the grip of communal violence.

4.2 Events June 1947 onwards

Momentous political changes were initiated in the country on 3rd June 1947. The British government announced its scheme of the partition of British India into two dominions, India and Pakistan. It was made clear that the partition was applicable to the British India only. The Indian states would be dealt with under the terms of the Cabinet Mission Memorandum to the Chancellor of Indian Princes on 12 May 1946, which in effect stated that once self-governing governments came into being in British India, His Majesty's government would cease to exercise the power of paramountcy over the princes, bringing to an end the political arrangements (and hence Defence also) between the States and the British government. The princes could enter into agreements with the new government or governments.

On 17th June, the British Parliament passed the Indian Independence Act, under which two dominions, India and Pakistan would come into existence on 15th August 1947. It was

reiterated that paramountcy of the British Crown would lapse to the Princes, who were free to accede to one or the other dominion, keeping in view the principle of contiguity.

The 562 princes had to decide the fate of their people and of themselves also, as quickly as possible before 14th August. Till then, there was only one Governor General. So like his colleagues, Maharaja Hari Singh had to take a decision, keeping in view the socio-cultural and political conditions in view.

On 19th June 1947, the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten came to Kashmir on a four day visit. He advised the Maharaja not to declare independence, but to ascertain the will of the people in any manner and accede to either of the Dominions. He had the authority from future rulers (i.e. Congress leadership) of India to assure His Highness that if he chose to join Pakistan, they would not object. Mountbatten was also of the opinion that if Hari Singh would accede to India, Pakistan could not interfere, as it did not exist. The Viceroy therefore, insisted that the decision was to be taken before 14th August 1947. In his speech in London on his return from India, Lord Mountbatten lamented that in spite of his repeated advice to the above effect, His Highness did nothing, giving rise to complications. (Ref: Time to Look Forward - PP 268-69). About the visit, Campbell-Johnson in his book 'My Mission with Mountbatten' says, " When he (Viceroy) got there, he found the Maharaja very elusive and the only conversations that took place, were when they were driving. The formal meeting fixed for the ultimate day could not take place as the Maharaja suffered a colic attack. Uncertainty and indecision continued.

Towards the end of July 1947, Mahatma Gandhi visited Srinagar. He was not allowed to address the people. He advised the Maharaja to constitute a democratic government implying releasing National Conference leaders and associating Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah with administration. All that happened was that Thakur Janak Singh, a former revenue minister replaced R.C.Kak as Prime Minister.

On 12 August, Kashmir telegraphically entered into a standstill agreement with Pakistan regarding continuance of Civil Supplies, Transport, Communications, Postal Services etc. A similar telegram was sent to the Government of India. They wanted a personal discussion which never matured.

Soon after the creation of Pakistan, trouble started first in Poonch and then on the Poonch-Mirpur border. On 4th September 1947, the Kashmir government lodged a strong protest with the government of West Punjab against large scale border raids by armed Muslims. Ignoring the protest, the Pak administration clamped an economic blockade, cutting essential supplies. Instead of seeking relief from India and reading the writing on the wall, Maharaja Hari Singh thought it fit to send a cable to the British Prime Minister. By the end of September, the border raids increased and the situation became explosive. The British Prime Minister ignored the cable and the Maharaja was alarmed.

Thakur Janak Singh, after staying in office for about two months was replaced by Meharchand Mahajan, an eminent jurist. On 29th September 1947, full 1-1/2 months after Pakistan had been born, Hari Singh released Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah and other NC leaders and workers. Sensing danger, the NC leaders activated the organisation. A delegation under G.M.Sadiq was sent to Pakistan. Sadiq met Liaqat Ali Khan, the Pak PM twice and presented

to him, a four point proposal; 1) to support Kashmiri People's struggle for self-rule; 2) to recognise the right of the people to decide the question of accession; 3) to allow people some time for it and 4) not to precipitate the matter meanwhile. G.M.Sadiq had to come back empty-handed and hurriedly in the face of a strict blockade.

Maharaja Hari Singh was under pressure. He was advised even by Sardar Patel to associate Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah with the administration and take a decision. This, both Nehru and Patel felt was necessary to face any trouble from Pakistan which they feared. Unfortunately, time was allowed to slip. Armed incursions became more frequent, necessitating the deployment of state forces in small strength all along the border, leaving no reserves in the barracks. Brig. Gansara Singh, who had been sent to Gilgit as Governor to receive charge from the British, was facing a revolt.

On 22nd October 1947, 5000 armed tribesmen guided by Maj. Gen. Akbar Khan (under the name of General Tariq) entered the State and occupied Muzaffarabad and Domel. Their onward march was halted for two days by the valiant Brig. Rajinder Singh.

The NC organised National Militia under the guidance of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. Thousands of men and women volunteered to join it. Some of them were given short training in rifle-shooting. They were to maintain law and order, to keep vigil against enemy infiltration in the city and suburbs, and to assist the civil administration. Civil transport, whatever available was requisitioned along with the drivers for use in the emergency.

The Maharaja sent an SOS to the government of India for military help on 24th Oct. 1947. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah also flew to Delhi to appeal to the Indian Cabinet. Meanwhile, raiders were marching towards Baramulla.

On 25th October 1947, the Defence Committee met under the Chairmanship of the Governor General, Mountbatten to decide on the Maharaja's request for supply of arms and ammunition. At this meeting, General Lockhart, the Commander-in-Chief in India, read a telegram from Pakistan Army stating that 5000 armed raiders had entered and occupied Muzaffarabad, and many more were on their way. Would the supply of arms and ammunition to the local population meet the requirement in the face of a massive armed raid? The problem of troop reinforcement was talked, but according to Campbell-Johnson, Lord Mountbatten ruled it out till the State had acceded. V.P.Menon, the Secretary M.O. Indian States was sent to Kashmir immediately. Menon flew to Kashmir, assessed the situation, advised the Maharaja to leave for Jammu along with him and went back to Delhi. On 26 October, the Instrument of Accession was signed by the Maharaja, Meharchand Mahajan and Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah.

The accession of Jammu and Kashmir was accepted by the Governor General in the same way as in the case of other 560 odd Indian States. However in a separate letter to the Maharaja, Lord Mountbatten said, "In consistence with the policy of government of India that in the case of any state where the issue of accession has been a matter of dispute, the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of State. It is my government's wish that as soon as the State has been cleared of the raiders and as soon as law and order has been restored, the question of State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people."

Pandit Janki Nath Kachroo

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5.0 GARDEN TRADITION AND THE MUGHAL CONTRIBUTION

The conspicuous contribution by the Mughals to the architectural wealth of Kashmir lies in the large number of gardens with their schemes of fountains and cascades which they built at several beauty spots in the Valley. Today they are major attraction to the tourists, both Indian and foreign. Their importance cannot be underestimated.

The history of the garden designs in Kashmir is closely associated with Buddhist landscape gardening in China. From ancient times, flowers and plants have been admired and cultivated in India. Flower cultivation was almost a religious compulsion with Hindus - one had to make early morning offering of flowers to the deity. The ancient Indian like the Chinese preferred still-water, lotus bearing waters pent up within paved embankments.

With the propagation of the Buddhist doctrine, the lotus assumed a special significance. Kashmir, endowed with springs, lakes, glens and beautiful flowers is truly Nature's own garden, requiring hardly any human effort to improve upon. However, slopes touching water reservoirs or areas around springs were well utilised by the early Hindus in laying out landscape gardens.

Sir Aurel Stein found evidence of the existence of gardens and ponds with lotuses along the route from Kashmir to Khotan. It, according to him and other travellers, is both reasonable and safe to believe that the Hindu and the Buddhist missionaries, especially the Kashmirians, carried the garden tradition with them into China and beyond to Japan. The Kashmirian Buddhist monk, Dharmamitra founded a Vihara at Tunghuang in China and planted more than 1000 trees round it.

In Central Asia and Persia, the garden tradition took a different shape under the Muslim rule. The first condition was always the availability of life giving water. Water was directed through paved channels to a central reservoir. Artificial cascades and fountains were introduced. This formed a distinct feature in their garden designs.

The Mughals from Babar to Shahjehan were great lovers of gardens. Babar had developed a taste to garden designs in Samarkand and Farghana, where Indian garden design had undergone considerable changes as mentioned. The Mughals reintroduced the old Indian art from their homeland. The Mughal gardens in India are copied from the gardens in Turkistan and Persia.

Kashmir was brought under the Mughal sway by Akbar who found the place resembling his original homeland in Turkistan. His successor Jehangir and his queen Nurjehan excelled all others in laying out gardens in Kashmir. Shahjehan improved upon them and laid some new ones. Also did some nobles, governors, princes and princesses responsible for laying some gardens.

5.1 Shalimar Garden

The best example of the existence of a garden tradition in Kashmir from ancient times, is provided by the famous Shalimar Garden on the Dal Lake. A garden existed here in ancient times. During the reign of Pravarsena II, the founder of Srinagar city, there is said to be a villa called Man Shalla or the Hall of Love. The king used to visit a saint named Sukram

Swami living near Harwan. On his way to his Ashram, or back from it to his place, the king used to rest at his garden villa. In the course of time, the villa vanished and the village came to be known as Shalamar.

In 1619, Jehangir laid out a garden at this spot, calling it 'Farahbaksh' or 'Delightful'. Eleven years later, Zaffar Khan, a governor of Kashmir, extended it and the addition was called 'Faizbaksh' or 'Beautiful'. In the course of time, this came to be called as Shalamar Garden.

Shalamar is laid in typically Mughal design. It is rectangular in shape, the area being divided into a series of Parterres. Being at the foot of a hill, it has become easier to divide it in four terraces. There is a line of tanks along the middle of the whole length of the garden. These are connected by a canal. The tanks and the canal have their own scheme of fountains and cascades. The canal and the tanks are lined with polished lime stone resembling black marble. The water to feed there, is brought from Harwan stream flowing in the back of the garden. The water enters at the upper end and flows down from terrace to terrace feeding numerous fountains. After leaving the garden, the water finally joins the lake by a canal.

The garden is tastefully laid. There are flower beds on either bank of the canal and around small lawns. Decorative plants lend their charm, especially in the evenings in the artificial light. Huge Chinars provide shade to the visitors.

The fourth terrace was private portion of the garden, where the ladies of the harem stayed. It contains a magnificent black-stone pavilion on a 65 feet square platform. The pavilion is surrounded by a reservoir 52 yards square and about 3.5 feet deep. It is lined with stones and has 140 fountains.

It is said that Jehangir had the intense delight of making up quarrel he had with his charming queen Nur Jehan, 'the light of the world' while resting here.



6.0 FANATICISM NOT HEREDITARY

Hindu rule in Kashmir came to an end when Shah Mir captured the throne in 1339. He assumed the name of Sultan Shamas-ud-Din and founded the Sultan Dynasty, which ruled the Valley for 222 years.

Sultan Sikander (1389-1413) was the most infamous of the Sultans. He was the most intolerant, biggoted and a religious fanatic. Because of his policy of religious persecution, there was a large scale migration of Hindus, besides conversion. He earned the nickname of Butshikan, the iconoclast, for resorting to the destruction of temples and images (idols) of Hindu gods. Ironically, both his father Qutub-ud-Din (1373-1389) and his son, the illustrious Zain-ul-Abdin (1420-1470) were not only free from religious fanaticism but visibly liberal and just.

6.1 Liberalism of Qutub-ud-Din

Famines were, unfortunately, of regular occurrence in Kashmir during the reign of Qutub-ud-Din. Often the severity of the scarcity of food grains was, as always, felt in the months of June and July. The King resorted to a novel practice of not only helping his depressed subjects divert their attention from a constant anxiety of want but also providing them with opportunities of sharing the stocks of grains stored by the more fortunate. During these months of scarcity, the King, his ministers, nobles and the affluent used to perform 'Yagnyas' and distribute cooked food amongst the starving population irrespective of their faith.

Qutub-ud-Din allowed continuance of Hindu dress, manners, customs among the converts to Islam. His participation in and encouragement to the performance of Yagnyas, though for a humanistic objective only, shows his religious tolerance and a deep sense of humanism.

The Sultan and his Muslim subjects used to visit a temple in Alau-ud-Din Pura every morning. Qutub-ud-Din had two wives who were sisters. This is not permissible under Muslim law. These non-orthodox practices did not appeal to Sayyid Ali Hamdani, who exhorted the King to divorce one of them and remarry the other according to the tenets of Islam. He advised him to change his dress. In spite of the fact that the King held the saint in high esteem, he did not accept his advice.

6.2 Zain-ul-Abdin's Justice

Zain-ul-Abdin firmly believed that the primary responsibility of the state was justice, equality and economic prosperity. He was not only just but believed in being seen as just. He possessed an uncanny sense of solving crimes. Zain ul Abdin was visibly impartial particularly in sensitive matters of Hindu-Muslim relations. The following episodes (cases) illustrate these claims:-

6.3 Instinctive Justice

Zain-ul-Abdin (1420-1470) was not only a far-sighted, impartial, able administrator and a reformer, but he exhibited tremendous religious tolerance and possessed a keen sense of

Zain-ul-Abdin summoned the alleged thief to his presence and asked him to answer the Brahmin's charge. The man denied the charge and said that the cow belonged to him and was with him ever since its birth. But the Brahmin insisted. In order to test the veracity of the accusation, the King threw some green waternuts before the cow and its calf. The cow ate all of them with relish while the calf after some sniffs turned its head from them. This clearly proved that the cow while with the Brahmin was accustomed to eating waternuts, a product of the Wular Lake whereas the calf which had been brought up in Maraj district, was totally unaccustomed to this sort of food. The King gave his verdict after the thief had confessed his crime. The cow along with the calf was restored to the rightful owner and the thief was suitably punished.

It is claimed that the Saiyyid was never seen in that kingdom thereafter. Any lessons for the present!!



7.0 13TH JULY 1931 AND AFTER

13th July 1931 is a landmark in the annals of modern Kashmir. On that day, open demonstration against the despotic rule of the Maharaja took place. The flash point was reached by the arrest and trial of one non-Kashmiri Abdul Qadir, for his alleged seditious speech delivered by him in the precincts of Khanqah of Shah Hamadan. Interestingly, Abdul Qadir had come to Kashmir as a cook of a European visitor.

On 13th July, Qadir's trial was being held in the Srinagar Jail, evidently to keep off excited crowds. Nevertheless, large crowds outside the jail raised slogans protesting against the Trial. They were joined by the prisoners inside the jail. Situation went out of control. Under the orders of the district magistrate, armed police opened fire. Twenty-one persons were killed. Wide disturbances in the city followed. Hindu shops were looted, some property burnt. In the communal outburst, three Hindus at Vicharnag, a suburb of Srinagar, were killed. Since then, 13th July is being observed as Martyr's Day. It is a Public holiday.

7.1 The Background

This event did not happen a day too soon or a day too late. The time was ripe for such a happening. A fertile ground for appropriate mass action or reaction had assiduously been prepared by forces more than one.

Certain influential Kashmiri Muslims settled outside Kashmir raised their voice against the inaction and neglect of education of the Muslims. At the request of the State Government, the Education Commissioner of Govt. of India (GOI), Mr. Sharp made some recommendations, which the Maharaja accepted. In 1924, the Viceroy Lord Reading received a memorial from some leading members of the Muslim community making demands of far reaching consequences, including grant of proprietary rights in land to peasants and a larger representation in government service. The Maharaja did not like it but GOI gave a clear message that it would not shy away from interfering.

The Twenties of the last century witnessed a phenomenal rise in the popularity of Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. To counter this, the British Government in India (GOI) pursued a communal policy. Kashmir, with Muslim majority population and ruled by a Hindu prince could not be lost sight of.

A large number of organisations formed by influential Kashmiri Muslims settled outside the state, mushroomed up. The most vocal and prominent among them was called the Kashmir Muslim Conference of Lahore and Simla (later christened as All India Kashmir Muslim Conference). The famous poet, Sir Mohd. Iqbal was a member of this organisation. Leaders of these organisations believed that the backwardness and poverty of their brethren back home were the result of neglect and discrimination by the Hindu regime under the Dogra rule. They publicised their opinion widely and demanded immediate redressal.

Back home, especially in the Valley, a sizeable number of Muslim youth with degrees from different Indian universities, particularly from the Muslim University, Aligarh formed the Reading Room Party. They would meet, discuss the opinions of the various Kashmiri Muslim organisations and echo their sentiments in different mosques. They took upon themselves,

Maharaja Hari Singh, speaking as the representative of the Indian princes at the Round Table Conference in London, declared the princes' support to patriotic demands. This seems to have acted as the Catalyst. Abdul Qadir episode was the signal for 13 July 1931 outburst.

Maharaja Hari Singh was awakened from his slumber. He tried to assert his authority. He appointed a committee of officials, presided over by the Chief Justice of the state High Court to enquire into 13 July happenings. People doubted its impartiality and rejected it. The British Resident asked for an impartial enquiry. The Maharaja dismissed his British minister and appointed Raja Hari Kishen Koul, an able administrator as Prime Minister. The agitation continued and so did the repressive measures of arrest, firing and even the flogging under the inhuman 19-L law. This was the ripe stage for the British Government in India to step in.

7.3 Glancy Commission

Also Col. E.J.D.Colvin of the Political department was appointed as the Prime Minister. Political prisoners were released and repressive laws withdrawn. Three other officers of the Indian Civil Service joined the Kashmir Cabinet as ministers. They held charge of important departments of Home, Revenue and Police. Thus the British Government of India achieved its objective, namely complete control of J&K administration. The event (13 July 1931) marked the beginning of political activities in the state.



8.0 KASHMIRI LOSES HER INDEPENDENCE

Babar founded Mughal rule in India in 1526 AD. His mission was clear to him; he aimed at building an empire. Kashmir, occupying an important strategic position, could not escape his notice. The beauty of the Valley with its bracing climate had an additional attraction to the Mughals, inhabitants of a cold country. But subduing Kashmir was not an easy cake-walk for the Mughals. After facing setbacks more than once and suffering a little humiliation, Mughals finally claimed Kashmir to be a part of their empire only in 1586, i.e. 60 years after the occupation of Delhi throne. This success came to the then Mughal emperor not by using his prowess but a strategy.

In 1526, Kashmir was under the rule of Sultan Mohammad Shah (IV). Anarchy prevailed in the kingdom due to the fighting among petty nobles and also rivalry among the scions and their successors of Zain-ul-Abidin. Among the nobles, two prominent persons Kazi Chak and Malik Abdal Magrey played an important role.

In 1527, Babar sent a force under Kushak Beg and Ali Beg to help Sikander in securing the throne by overthrowing the ruling prince. The Kashmiris saw through the trick which was to bring Kashmir under the Mughal hegemony. As a result, the otherwise rival feudal lords of the Valley rallied under the banner of Kazi Chak, whose patriotism was stirred. He was at Naushera then, having been driven out of the Valley by his powerful rival, Abdal Magrey. Kazi Chak collected a force comprising the hill tribes and exiled Kashmiri soldiers, put his 18 year old son at its head and conducted a successful operation against the mighty Mughals, who had to withdraw ignominiously without entering the Valley.

Kazi Chak became a hero. He was appointed as Wazir. However, his rival Abdal Magrey took shelter under Babar and induced him to make another attempt. Babar agreed but used a different excuse. Kazi Chak, removing Muhammad Shah from the throne, had put up his son Prince Ibrahim on the throne. Babar got Nazuk Shah, a scion of Shah Mir declared as Sultan of Kashmir. Some nobles helped him and with the help of the Mughal army, defeated the forces of Kazi Chak and enthroned Nazuk Shah. Only after one year in 1530, Muhammad Shah was restored. Magrey quickly sensed the resentment of the nobles against the presence of the Mughal soldiers who were sent back from Kashmir. Thus Babar failed a second time in bringing Kashmir under his sway.

The Mughals made a third attempt during Humayun's rule. A strong Mughal force of 3000 horse under Mehram Beg entered Srinagar without much resistance. But soon the Kashmiri nobles patched up their differences again and invited Kazi Chak to lead them to drive the invader out of their native land. The Mughals could not stand the pressure mounted by the Kashmiris. They agreed to quit the Valley on promise of a safe passage to the Punjab.

Mirza Haider Dughlat, an adventurer from Tashkent and a close relative of Babar tried his luck in 1533 but met with the combined resistance of Kazi Chak and Abdal Magrey. However, Mirza Dughlat helped by Abdal Magrey occupied Srinagar in 1540 AD and placed Nazuk Shah on the throne. Dughlat thus exercised influence on the Sultan and increased the influence of the Mughals for eleven years till his death. But the Sultans retained independence.

Meanwhile, the last Sultan ruler, Habib Shah was removed from the throne of Kashmir and replaced by Ghazi Chak. The rule of Kashmir passed on to Chaks in 1561.

During early years of Akbar's rule, Shamas Raina, a local noble helped Abdul Mali, a favourite of Humayun, to invade Kashmir, but was defeated by Ghazi Chak. Kashmir continued to be independent.

Hussain Shah Chak ascended the throne of Kashmir in 1563 AD. Chaks were the followers of Shia faith. Helped and instigated by the Imperial government at Agra, Shia-Suni conflict took a violent turn. Akbar made a diplomatic move. He sent two envoys, both of Shia faith to Kashmir to ask the Chak ruler Hussain to accept the Mughal suzerainty. The Chak ruler refused and sent away the envoys with presents for the King. Akbar made another diplomatic attempt in 1578 AD, but not much was achieved.

In 1579, Yusuf Shah Chak ascended the throne. A lover of music, Yusuf married a simple but romantic girl Zooni, later known as Habba Khatoon. She was a singer and a poetess. People lost their confidence in their king. His wise minister Mohammad Bahaqi took over the charge of the ruler and forced Yusuf Shah to flee to seek Akbar's help. Finding it a great opportunity, Akbar sent Mughal soldiers under Raja Man Singh. But Yusuf Chak realised his shortsighted act and persuaded Man Singh not to proceed to Srinagar, but himself went at the head of a small army of 4000 from hill tribes. He succeeded in capturing the throne once again.

Akbar made more than one attempt to bring Yusuf Shah to attend his court but all in vain.

Thus Kashmir maintained her freedom and the mighty Mughals failed to win Kashmir either militarily or diplomatically, right from 1526 to 1586 AD. Throughout the period, the Kashmiris gave proof of their patriotism and exhibited a wonderful ability of facing the enemy unitedly, inspite of mutual differences.

The determined Akbar, the great Mughal Emperor now decided to make the final bid to annexe Kashmir by means fair or foul.

On December 20, 1585, a strong force of 500 horse under the command of Raja Bhagwan Das marched into Kashmir via Jhelum valley route. Yusuf Shah felt nervous and thought it futile to offer any resistance. But his youthful and dashing son, Yaqub put up a stiff resistance. Bhagwan Das's benumbed force could make no progress and entered into negotiation with Yusuf Shah. It was agreed that 1) The Mughals would withdraw, 2) Yusuf Shah would retain the throne, 3) Coins would be struck and Khutba read in the name of the emperor, 4) Yusuf Shah was persuaded to travel to Attock to receive regards from the emperor and where the treaty would be ratified. Though advised by his son not to go, Yusuf Shah travelled only to be imprisoned there. Bhagwan Das thought it as a betrayal and even attempted suicide. When Akbar reached Lahore, he handed over Yusuf Shah to Raja Tudarmal. After two and a half years, he was given a Mansab of 500 horse, sent to Bihar and not allowed to go back. In 1592, he died there and was buried in Patna.

Back home, Yaqub Shah continued to rule as the Sultan of Kashmir, disregarding the terms of agreement and striking coins in his name. But soon, he, because of a ruthless policy of terror, lost the confidence of his people. Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi, a poet, a respected Suni,

secured the support of a large number of Kashmiri nobles, and invited Akbar to come to Kashmir to put an end to the prevailing lawlessness. Assured of local help and support, the Triumphant Mughals entered Srinagar on 14 October 1586.

Thus Kashmir lost its independence to become a province of the Mughal Empire.

Yaqub Shah made futile attempts to regain his throne. It took three years for the Mughal Subedhars to restore complete order. On 14th October 1589, Akbar, the great Mughal entered Srinagar to a rousing reception by all sections of the people who were sick of the lawlessness and intrigues of the nobles.



9.0 KASHMIRI UNDER MUGHALS

It is said, " Great kings can do great things, but they cannot guarantee great successors." Unfortunately for Kashmir, Budshah's successors proved the truth of the saying. After the death of Zain-ul-Abideen, Kashmir came under the rule of incompetent, indifferent and in certain cases licentious Sultans. Chaks who succeeded the Sultans were no better. They instead of undoing the ills that had crept in worsened the situation. The period of more than a century (1470-1586 AD) destroyed peace, tranquility and amity to give place to misrule, intrigues, internecine quarrels and revolts. It gradually saw the revival of the Sultan Sikandar's disastrous policy of religious bigotry. The Chaks fuelled Shia-Sunni conflict and hatred. It took violent turns at times. It was for Akbar and his successors to put the newly acquired territory on the path of peace and prosperity.

Mughals entered and occupied Kashmir in October 1586. As a province of the great Moghul empire, Kashmir started being administered by Subedhars (governors) appointed by the imperial government. Naturally the administrative pattern of Kashmir was brought in line with that prevailing in the rest of the empire. The main features of the Mughal rule in India, according to Sir Jadunath Sarkar were:

1. The uniform administrative type through out the subhas;
2. One official language;
3. One uniform system of coinage;
4. An all India cadre of higher services, the officers being transferred every three or four years;
5. Frequent march of armies from province to province and;
6. Deputation of inspecting officers from the Centre.

Thus Kashmir broke age old isolation and joined a bigger world for the first time.

Kashmir under Akbar (1586 -1605) Akbar believed that Kashmir was essential to the geopolitics of Agra. It seems he aimed at retaining the control of the territory (now a Moghul province) and at the same time earning the affection and support of the people.

Akbar sent his army under a governor, Mirza Qasim. The emperor's guidelines to the governor were significant. He laid down : " to practise enlightenment, justice, non-sufferance of wickedness" However the first priority of armies was order. So Mirza Qasim, the first Subhedar deliberately used ruthless measures to smash all the opposition to the Mughal occupation. This continued till the summer of 1587, when he was replaced by Mirza Yusuf khan Rizvi. He ushered in a benevolent era of administration. It took him just about two years to suppress all opposition and create a peaceful atmosphere.

9.1 Akbar's Visit

Akbar visited Kashmir first time in October 1589. He repeated his visits in 1592 and 1598 A.D. He stayed in the valley not for pleasure only. He took personal cognizance of people's wishes and demands. He took interest in the administrative affairs and took measures of far

reaching consequences. In total, his policies and decisions, actions and precedents were aimed at establishing peace prosperity based on justice and equality. His major decisions can be summarised as under:

9.1.1 Healing touch

During the Chak rule Sunnis were persecuted and Brahmins denied religious freedom. The era of religious discrimination and persecution practised by the Sultans was reinforced with the imposition of new taxes. Sukha, the historian says: "In every Brahmin house who maintained his caste, used to pay a tribute. For every religious practice, a Brahmin had to pay tax or fine." On his arrival in the province, Akbar announced that he would redress all the grievances of the people. No wonder he was warmly greeted on his arrival. Immediately he ordered :

1. Abolition of all discriminatory taxes including the hated Jazia.
2. He abolished all distinction based on religious sentiments and treated Sunnis and Shias equally.
3. He ordered that an officer helping a Brahmin or encouraging him to observe any religious function will be rewarded.
4. He ordered that the house of any officer found harassing a Hindu would be pulled down.
5. He visited Martand and distributed cows adorned with gold and pearls among Brahmins.
6. He joined the Diwali celebrations and got both banks of the Vitasta illuminated.
7. He prohibited the slaughter of cows.
8. On one of his visits he joined the festivities connected with the birth of Vitasta, as Zian-ul-Abideen would do on the 13th of the bright fortnight (moonlit) Bhadoon. Both banks of the river were illuminated with tiny lamps and the emperor went on the river in a decorated luxurious barge, specially made for the occasion. The hills round Srinagar and house tops were also illuminated. The emperor held a durbar to wind the festivities. The celebration also marked the end of a terrible famine that had preceded.

9.1.2 Welfare and Relief Measures

1. It was Akbar who for the first time suggested that some of the boats plying on the lake could be transformed as to be used for residential purposes.
2. He recognised the importance of shawl weaving. He ordered special facilities for the development of arts and crafts including shawl making and marketing.
3. During his very first visit he ordered the construction of a bastion wall round Hariparbat and a palace inside it. The purpose was to create work to help the people rendered poor due to misrule of Chaks.
4. He imported large quantity of food grains during famines.
5. He initiated public welfare works, especially to fight famine. They included
 - (a) Building of roads,
 - (b) Digging canals etc.

6. In 1592, he held a durbar, distributed in alms the gold and silver with which he had weighed himself.

7. Instead of distribution of free food only to fight famine, Akbar increased the purchasing capacity of the people. Besides other smaller works, he ordered the construction of a massive wall round Hariparbat and the city Nagar-Nagar. It took 8 years to complete it. Besides 200 skilled workers brought from India, a very large number of local labour earned their wages, which were higher than the prevailing rates. Total cost of the project is said to be 11,000,000 Akbarshahi. There was no begar, free labour.

8. Akbar was very sensitive to the complaints or grievances of the people. Soldiers living in the city in the vicinity of the civilians were a source of harassment to the common people. He ordered the construction of a township on the slopes of the Hariparbat, named it Nagar-Nagar and shifted the soldiers there, making the civilian areas out of bounds to them. Even harassment of any civilian by the soldier was made a cognizable offence. Akbar inaugurated the whole complex on his visit in 1598.

9.1.3 Administrative Reform

Akbar did not neglect sound administration. He got revenue settlement carried out on the lines of Todarmal. Todarmal made Persian as court language. Kashmiri Pandits had gained mastery over Persian language for a century before Todarmal's decision. As per necessity for the smooth administration, there was massive recruitment of Pandits to the Imperial Administrative Service. Some of them rose very high. Generally speaking the administrative pattern continued even after Akbar, who died in 1605.

9.2 Jehangir

Jehangir succeeded his father, emperor Akbar in 1605 AD.

9.2.1 First Visit

Accompanying his father, Jehangir visited Kashmir for the first time in 1589 AD. He seems to have fallen in love with the beauty of the Valley, its flora and fauna. In his memoirs 'Tuzk-i-Jehangiri', he eloquently describes its picturesque dales, its pleasant meadows, enchanting cascades, its verdure, its springs lakes and running water. Its multicoloured flowers and sweet scented herbs captivated his imaginations.

Jehangir and his versatile queen Noor Jehan visited Kashmir several times. Their presence prevented any abuse of power by the governors. It also ensured justice and fair play.

9.2.2 Gardens

The rule of Jehangir will always be remembered by his various gardens, still attraction of tourists. His governor Dilawar Khan laid many gardens. The name Bagh-e-Dilawar still exists. Jehangir himself got Shalimar laid, while Noor Jehan's brother Asaf Khan laid the Nishat garden. He planted Chinars systematically to create Char Chinari. Jehangir got an octagonal tank of sculptured stones made round the spring at Veerinag in 1620. Noor Jehan got a garden laid at Achabal.

9.2.3 Administration

Jehangir's rule is known for his justice. He stopped the inhuman practice of Sati among Hindus and burying alive of Muslim widows. He made infanticide of girl child a crime. He also banned forcible conversions. He abolished levies like Rasum-i-Faujdari.

9.2.4 Plague and Fire

It was during the governorship of Ahmed Beg in 1615 that an epidemic of plague broke out in a virulent form. There was no remedy then for the disease. In a few days, thousands of people died. About 12000 houses were destroyed in a devastating fire in Srinagar. The Jama Masjid which was reduced to ashes was rebuilt at state expense.

9.2.5 Prosperity

The Valley flourished under Jehangir. The revenue rose to 74,670,000 dams.

In 1622, Itqad Khan, a close relation of Noor Jehan was appointed as the governor. He indulged with impunity in tyrannical rule. He levied hard taxes on all commodities and particular communities. Farmers, orchardists and even boatmen were his special targets. He introduced Begar (forced labour). He tyrannised Shias. His misconduct and harsh treatment of the people marred Jehangir's otherwise golden rule.

Jehangir died on 7 November 1627 at Behramgali, while on his way back from Kashmir. He was buried at Lahore.

9.3 Shah Jehan: 1627-58 AD

Jehangir was succeeded by his son Shah Jehan. The emperor took greater interest in Kashmir than his father. He visited Kashmir several times and like his father, was fascinated by its beauty.

Itqad Khan continued as governor for six years under Shah Jehan. Taking undue advantage of his relation with Noor Jehan, he continued his misrule. Shah Jehan ultimately replaced Iqbal Khan by Zaffar Khan, a poet, a scholar and kind good administrator. On his recommendation, the emperor ordered abolition of all cruel taxes and relief to farmers, orchardists and boatmen.

Zaffar Khan improved quality and taste of plum, peach and grapes by introducing better grafts and saplings from Iran and Afghanistan. He reduced Baltistan to vassalage, in spite of bad weather and difficult terrain. He suppressed Shia-Sunni rioting, deporting the leader of Sunnis to Agra. In 1638, when Shah Jehan was in Kashmir, a severe famine followed a devastating flood. The emperor cut short his visit and personally supervised despatch of grain from the Punjab.

Zaffar Khan was replaced by prince Morad, the younger son of the Emperor. Given to a life of pleasure and luxury, Morad neglected his official duties. Taking undue advantage of their relation with the prince, the Maliks (whose daughter the prince had married) resorted to illegal exactions. On hearing about his misrule, the prince was removed only after one year. He was replaced by Ali Mardan Khan. He had come by a huge treasure as governor of Kandhar. Though an Iranian, he refused to give the money to the Shah of Iran. He came to India and was sent as governor to Kashmir, where he spent the money. He was tolerant and appointed Mahadev as his chief adviser.

Ali Mardan Khan is credited with building Sarais on Mughal Road. Cheshma Shahi garden was laid during his governorship. Shah Jehan, the great Mughal builder, is known in Kashmir for building Cheshma Shahi pavilion, the upper portion of Shalimar with its pavilion, the scheme of fountains and Pari Mahal upon the spur of Zabarwan hill on the Dal Lake (also presumed to have been built by Dara Shikoh for his school of Suffism and an observatory).

Shah jehan was dethroned and imprisoned by his son Aurangzeb in 1658.

9.4 Aurangzeb: 1658-1707 AD

The mighty empire founded by Babar and consolidated by Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jehan witnessed the beginning of its end with the accession of Aurangzeb to the throne. Reason: Reversal of Akbar's policy or Aurangzeb's communal discrimination. Aurangzeb was a puritan and conservative in outlooks, otherwise he was honest and lived an austere life.

Aurangzeb visited Kashmir only once in 1665. Considering the visit a share luxury, he never repeated it.

14 governors were sent to Kashmir during his regime. One Saif Khan (1664-67, 1668-71) built Safa Kadal. His adviser, Chaudhri Mahesh, laid out a garden on the slopes of the hill at Ishber. People were happy under certain subhedars. But there were certain exceptions. Iftikar Khan (1671-75) tyrannised over the Brahmins, who approached Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru at Anantpur for help. This ultimately led to Guru's martyrdom, and the conversion of Sikh community into a fighting Khalsa under his son, Guru Gobind Singh. Iftikar Khan was followed by equally cruel governors except Fazal Khan (1698-1701) who was liberal enough to give a peaceful time to the people. Aurangzeb died in 1707.

9.5 Successors of Aurangzeb: 1707-1753 AD

With the death of Aurangzeb, a series of wars of succession started. Fortunes of emperors and courtiers were changed rapidly. Governors appointed by various emperors were reluctant to move to Kashmir. They appointed their deputies. There is hardly any development to record. However, as in the rest of India, Kashmir witnessed the worst kind of intrigues, disorders and rebellions up to 1753. Tired of chaotic conditions, two prominent leaders of Kashmir Mir Muqim Kanth and Khwaja Zahir Dadmari took an impolitical step in inducing Ahmed Shah Abdali to invade Kashmir. Abdali sent a strong Afghan force under Abdullah Khan Ishk Aqasi. Afghans won the war after 15 days of bitter fight to bring the Mughal rule in Kashmir to an end.



10.0 BEYOND SYMBOLISM - OUR RITUALS

Taking courage in my both hands, I have ventured taking a leaf from the age-old history of our rich heritage rather than from the usual temporal history for this column. At the very outset, I must confess that I have little knowledge or study of our scriptures, mythology or philosophy. Just as a seeker of truth, what follows is a layman's interpretation of a very common ritual. I also wish to convey my readiness to correction. If it comes, it could further aim of finding as well disseminating the meaning of rituals to suit the modern mind of the growing generations.

Since my childhood, I have been having birthday pooja and witnessing the same of other members of my family. On birthdays of the male-members of the family, the 'Kula Guru' would bring from his home an artistically made 'Raksha', the wrist-band of red thread, with seven knots. Even now, the audio cassette that substitutes the 'Guru' directs the 'Jeyman' to tie seven knots on the wrist-band. This 'Raksha' is reverentially placed in a plate on flower petals. Each of the knot is to be applied a Tilak. While the Tilak is being applied on each by turns, the 'Guru' recites some mantras dedicating them (knots) to Aswathama, Bali, Vyas, Hanuman, Kripacharya and Parashurama, in that order. They are seven immortals in the Indian (Hindu) tradition.

These seven knots thus personify the seven immortals whom we worship on our birthdays. It is commonly believed that prayers are offered so that the subject of the ritual is granted immortality - a long life - like the seven immortals. To a modern mind, it is often a Wishful Prayer. And therefore, non-belief. But if the values each symbolises are borne in mind even during the 'pooja' period year after year and reminded of on the birthday, celebrations/pooja one attends or is a witness of, perhaps human conduct would be more sublime.

The values these immortals symbolise, are to be universal and basic truths which transcend time and space. The related truths or values to these immortals are derived from their actions in their 'lives'. They, ad-seriatim are:

1) Aswathama, the Consequence of an Unethical Conduct; 2) Bali - Valour and Charity with grace; 3) Vyas, the Continuity of erudition; 4) Hanuman, Righteous Conduct, Selfless Devotion and Courage; 5) Vibhisana, his Conviction in his ideal of righteousness; 6) Kripacharya, his Impartiality in the discharge of his duty; 7) Parashurama, his Humility, despite his prowess and might.

There must be some logic in their order. Whatever the logic may be, let us examine each from a common man's interpretation, implication and pragmatic application.

Aswathama had acquired mastery over the ultimate weapon. But he broke all the established ethical norms when he, along with a group of his companions, entered by stealth the Camp of Pandavas in their absence and got a number of men killed. He was caught but not killed. His Crown jewel - a gem - was prised out of his head. He was condemned to live forever, the wound never to heal. He attained immortality, but not an enviable one. His name is a reminder to the mortals, never to resort to an unethical conduct

however powerful he/she may be. Everyone has the potential to own and practise this truth, only if he/she wills. Hence perhaps, its pre-eminent position in aforesaid catalogue of values.

Bali knew who Vamana was. Yet he was prepared to surrender all he had to his lord. King Bali stands for his valour and charity. Everybody may not be as prosperous as Bali. But one can be graceful while giving charity whatever one can afford. No show.

It may not be possible for a common man to reach the height of scholarship and erudition of Vyas. But study of his works and understanding even a fraction of his wisdom, would be rewarding. His works belong to human race, irrespective of time and geographical boundaries. Truly immortal messages! Let the mortals discover them for their own benefit and elevation.

Hanuman, embodiment of energy and strength should be revered for his courage, righteous conduct and above all his selfless devotion. He stands for potential that is inherent in all of us.

Vibhisana's example of fearlessness and courage of conviction make him immortal. These dispositions are increasingly becoming rare in public life today. Therefore the chaos.

Kripacharya, takes priority over a more renowned teacher Dronacharya, the Guru of 'Danudhar Arjun' to immortality. Kripacharya is a symbol of impartiality. He has no Eklavya episode to shadow his career.

And lastly Parashuram, the master of martial arts, had no temporal ambition. He lived a hermit's life, though he could be a Samrat, if he had liked to be. He was one who was never hesitant to admit his mistake. He publicly apologised to both Ram and Lakshman for his mistake at the time of Sita's Swayamvar. Parashuram symbolises excellence and strength, tempered by humility.

Going back to the ritual. After the Janam Divas pooja and invocations, the 'Raksha', the wrist band with seven knots is tied round the right hand wrist of the 'birthday boy'. This is supposed to be changed by a similar one at the next birthday. It has thus to remain a part of the person throughout his life. To what purpose? Evidently to remind the wearer of the 'band' constantly that the seven knots personify the seven immortals who symbolise a string of values. They are supposed to send cosmic vibrations to the individual to sublimate human behaviour by practising them.

Let us consider one more practice. A new 'Jenu', the holy thread of three or six strands is renewed by the eligible on each birthday. He is expected to wash it every day and to repeat the sacred 'Gayatri Natra'. There is no such prescription for the 'Raksha', the wrist band. The mere view of the seven knots is sufficient to rouse his conscience and act as governors. It can be effective only if the moral tenets they represent are conveyed for motor response by the sensory perceptions. Pre-requisite condition is the awareness of the message these symbols carry.

All these truths/values are symbolised by no less than seven individuals, each endowed with extraordinary attributes. The Sceptics may doubt the practicability of observing all of them by an ordinary human in his/her mundane life. It is believed that the lessons derived from

From The Pages of History

Pandit Janki Nath Kachroo

the examples of Asawathama (Ethical Conduct) and Parshuram (Humility despite prowess) are all encompassing.

Is it not the right time to interpret the various symbols that our rituals represent so as to stem the waning faith of the growing generations exposed to the pulls and pressures generated in the global village they live in? Would it not enhance love of and loyalty to the faith and fold?

.....

11.0 1947-48: INDO-PAK WAR

Many questions in connection with the 1947-48 Indo-Pak war are still shrouded in mystery. For instance, the reasons why India did not carry out the war into Pakistan, as she did in 1965, have often been debated. The arguments for or against the decisions or the actions taken then are generally based on the relevant military developments. But we have seen in the last Kargil Conflict how international diplomacy works and influences the actions of even the sovereign nations. Nawaz Sharief was called to Washington to listen to President Clinton. India declared that she would not cross LOC either to chase the invaders or smash the supply centres of men and material on the other side of the line. Balanced answers to such questions may be available if the role of the British government and the British officers holding high offices in India and Pakistan is considered along with the military developments. It must be noted that the British government had a unique position at the time of transfer of power. Washington had accepted the leading role of Britain in the area of India and Pakistan. Britain had the political will and opportunity to safeguard its long term interests in the region. Above all, Britain had absolute control on the services and supplies (military) in India and Pakistan. Thus the British government had the power to influence the course of events in the immediate post-partition period which included the Junagadh crisis and more so the 1947-48 Indo-Pak war.

Without prejudicing the opinions of the individual readers, certain facts, some well known and others recent revelations are presented hereunder. It is hoped that they may help to find the true answers to the questions shrouded in mystery.

11.1 Policy/Objectives of Britain

The plan for the partition of India into India and Pakistan was announced on 3rd June 1947. Earlier the hopes were that India would be one country after the British withdrawal. The policy makers of Britain started thinking of the British interests in India after her independence. The following recommendations/minutes will make the intentions of the British clear:

1. In July 1946, the British Indian Chiefs of Staff Committee thought India would be an important military base because of her 'almost inexhaustible supply of manpower, rapidly growing industrial capacity and geo-strategic value'. The UK Chiefs of Staff added to the above observations.

"If the Indian demand for withdrawal were extended to include all British personnel including those in the services of the Indian government, the fulfillment of any of our strategic requirements would be improbable. It is in our view essential that the Indian Government should be persuaded to accept the assistance of the necessary number of British personnel."

These recommendations of the two Committees were forwarded by the then Viceroy, F.M.Wavel to Pathic Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India in July 1946.

2. In October 1946, the India office advised the Chiefs of Staff Committee: "If India were to split into two or more parts, the Moslem areas and the states would probably be anxious to remain in Common Wealth (C.W)."

3. Basing their calculations on Nehru's Foreign Policy pronouncements, the India office

(London) advised the Dominion office: "We think it unlikely that India will wish to continue in C.W. at any rate as at present constituted.

4. On 13th March 1947, at a meeting of the India and Burma Committee of the Cabinet, attended by Mountbatten (Viceroy-designate), it was agreed that the Viceroy (of India) should encourage any moves that might be taken by Indian leaders in favour of continuation of India within C.W.

5. On March 24th 1947, Nehru said to Mountbatten, "India wished to retain friendly ties with Britain but she could not stay in the C.W.

6. On April 11th 1947, Liaquat Ali said to Mountbatten, "Pakistan would want to remain in the C.W. and require British officers in her armed forces.

7. Jinnah said to Mountbatten, "You must realise that Pak is almost certain to ask for dominion status within the empire."

8. On 12th May 1947, the Chiefs of Staff came to the conclusion that: "From the strategic point of view, there were overwhelming arguments in favour of W.Pakistan remaining in the C.W., namely, that we should obtain important strategic facilities, the part of Karachi, air bases and the support of Moslem manpower in the future; be able to ensure the continued integrity of Afghanistan and be able to increase our prestige and improve our position throughout the Moslem world ..."

In June 1947, an agreement was reached between the British authorities, the Congress and the Muslim League on a plan for transfer of power to two independent states, India and Pakistan. Both the new states would initially continue to be in the C.W. with dominion status.

11.2 Security Arrangements

Note: i) India was in the grip of unprecedented communal riots before the partition plan was announced. ii) Millions of people migrated across the borders of the proposed two countries. iii) Law and order was entrusted to armed forces commanded by a British Officer.

In the wake of the agreement for partition of India, the following security arrangements were agreed upon:

1) Field Marshal (F.M.) Auchinleck was the Commander-in Chief (C in C) of the pre-independence Indian Army. He assumed the post of supreme commander of India and Pakistan on 15th August 1947. He presided over the division of military assets between India and Pakistan. Also, he exercised administrative control over British officers serving in the armed forces of India and Pakistan.

2) General Lockhart was the C in C of Indian Army from August to December 1947, when he was made to resign.

3) General Roy Bucher was the C in C of the Indian Army from 1949 to 1951.

4) General Douglas Gracey was Chief of Staff Pakistan Army in 1947-48 and C in C Pak Army 1949-51.

5) A Defence Committee of the Cabinet (Indian) was constituted on 15th Oct. 1947, with the Governor General, Lord Mountbatten as its Chairman, ostensibly to prevent any misunderstanding or action by the British officers, wittingly or unwittingly. This Committee played a vital role during the Kashmir operations.

6) Military Supplies: For both India and Pakistan, Britain was the leading overseas partner in trade, industry, finance, military equipment, spares and oil supplies.

11.3 Role of British Officers Defined

- Ref: War and Diplomacy in Kashmir 1947-48 by C.Dasgupta.*



12.0 INDO-PAK WAR - PART II

12.1 Introduction

About a month ago, somebody called me from Srinagar. He had somehow read Milchar, January-February 2004 issue. Referring to the article 'Indo-Pak War 1947', he said that questions raised therein for a reply are of academic interest. The most important 'problem' which owed its origin to 'the Indo-Pak Conflict' was the question of plebiscite. According to him, this was the only 'living question' of the period. This should get precedence. I agree with him.

I get tempted to trace the history of Kashmir in 1940's, so that decisions taken then are viewed in right historical perspective to enable the reader to come to a logical conclusion.

12.2 Fateful Forties And Kashmir

Forties of the last century have many defining moments in the course of world history. The first (and hopefully the last) nuclear Bomb was used as a weapon. The world war came to an end. Colonialism collapsed. The British withdrew from India. Two sovereign states, India and Pakistan, came into existence. And the Indian States saw the dawn of democracy replacing feudalistic regimes. Kashmir witnessed historical changes in its political affiliations. Some of the changes brought the State on the chessboard of national politics.

With the change of Muslim Conference (MC) into National Conference (NC) in 1939, and the endorsement of its National Demand Resolution by prominent Hindus and Sikhs, Kashmir Movement assumed a secular look.

In 1940, Jawahar Lal Nehru and Abdul Gaffar Khan visited Kashmir at the invitation of NC. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah acted as a perfect host. The NC came closer to the Indian National Congress (INC). In 1941, Sheikh Abdullah got NC affiliated to the All States Peoples' Conference. Nehru was its President then. Muslim League (ML) reacted by reviving MC under Ghulam Abbas, but it had little public support. NC passed a strong resolution supporting Quit India Movement launched by INC in 1942. In 1944, the NC issued an outline of the new Constitution in New Kashmir plan. It envisaged freedom, equality, democracy, joint electorate. Its economic creed was socialism, land to tillers etc.

The Muslim league had already passed the Lahore Resolution in 1940, demanding Pakistan on the basis of Two Nation Theory. Naya Kashmir (New Kashmir) slogan and the consequent popularity of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah alarmed the Muslim League. Jinnah attempted to woo the people of Kashmir.

On 19th May 1944, Jinnah was accorded a reception on behalf of the citizens of Srinagar at Pratap Park. Speaking on the occasion, Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah said, "..... you are a beloved leader of the Muslims of India we Kashmiris welcome you as a prominent Indian, despite ideological differences." Jinnah gave customary thanks to the people of Srinagar. Within an hour, speaking from the platform of MC at Jamia Masjid, Mr. Jinnah declared, "Muslims have one platform, one Kalima and one God All Muslims must come under one flag." Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah quickly declared in a rejoinder, "....ills of this land can be remedied by taking Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs together." On 24th June 1944, Abdullah issued a written statement saying, " Viewing the position from an all India perspective, we find that Mr. Jinnah has repeatedly declared that he does not extend his plans of

Pakistan to Indian States." Mr. Jinnah did not comment. Perhaps he could not, in view of his diverse interests. However, war of words continued. Mr. Jinnah called the leaders of NC as 'a gang of goondas'. Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah issued a sharp warning saying, "If Mr. Jinnah does not give up his habit of interfering in our politics, it will be difficult for him to go back in an honourable manner."

12.3 Baramulla Episode

Some present day writers consider this warning as a hollow rhetoric. I am an eye witness to the following episode:

After spending a considerable part of summer in Kashmir, Mr. Jinnah was scheduled to address a public gathering at Baramulla on his return journey. The meeting was arranged on the lawns of a masjid situated on the right bank of Vitasta, just to the east of the old bridge and opposite the Baramulla Hospital across the river. Just when Mr. Jinnah appeared on the dais in front of the mosque, there was commotion in the vast crowd that had assembled on the bank of the river. Hundreds of people rose up, unfolding banners with slogans: 'Hindu Muslim Sikh Itihad - Zindabad' and 'Qaid-e-Azam Sheri Kashmir, Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah - Zindabad'. There was pandemonium on the dias. Some people were seen rushing towards the entrance through which the guest was coming, carrying a string of chappals and shoes. Stones were pelted. The situation could not be controlled. People ran helter skelter. Mr. Jinnah had to be escorted safely back to his car. The rally ended in a fiasco. It was later rumoured that Mr. Jinnah did not oblige his hosts who had arranged a lunch at Khanpora on the outskirts of the town just on the highway.

V.D.Savarkar visited Kashmir in the autumn of the same year. It is interesting to note that Pandit S.N.Fotedar, President Yuvak Sabha told him that Hindu Fundamentalism was as alien to the culture of Kashmir as Muslim Fundamentalism.

12.4 The Winner

Leaders of INC who had been arrested during Quit India Movement were released in 1945. Nehru, Azad and Gaffar Khan visited Kashmir to a rousing reception including a splendid river procession, despite a threat of disruption issued by the MC. These leaders attended the annual open session of National Conference held at Sopore. The visiting leaders were present when Pandit Kashyap Bandhu moved the political resolution demanding responsible government under the aegis of His Highness.

Incidentally, Nehru on 7th August 1945 told the Kashmiri Pandits (reported in the Hindu of 10 August) : "I advise others to join it (NC) in much larger numbers and thereby influence its decisions."

Kashmiriyat was the lone winner and it survived the tests of that tragic decade.

12.5 Quit Kashmir Movement

The Cabinet Mission arrived in India in March 1946. On 12th May, the Mission issued a memorandum on the future of the Princely States: " His Majesty's Government will cease to exercise the powers of paramountcy.all rights surrendered by the States to the paramount power will return to the States." Would the princes be free to be independent? Would the British rule be replaced by Maharaja's autocracy? This was not acceptable to NC under Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah, who launched the Quit Kashmir Movement in May 1946.

On 3rd June 1947, the British government announced the partition plan, reiterating the Cabinet Mission declaration on Indian States which could now accede to either dominion, observing the principle of contiguity. Theoretically the princes could be even independent. The right of decision, primarily rested with the ruler of each state. The Muslim League of India thought it was the exclusive right of the rulers to decide the accession of their states. The India National Congress held the view that the will of the people would decide the question of accession in case of non-agreement between the rulers and the ruled. Thus on the eve of India's independence, Kashmir was ideologically and emotionally closer to Indian National Congress than to Muslim League. The INC particularly Jawahar Lal Nehru had demonstrated support and sympathy for Kashmiris.



13.0 INDO-PAK WAR - PART III

13.1 Plebiscite - Its Genesis and Current Status

The secessionists hold that the Kashmir's accession was subject to people's will and also to the implementation of an UNO resolution. They claim India has not honoured her promises. On the other hand, critics of Nehru blame him of Idealism. It would be appropriate to trace the historical march of events in this regard for an impartial, realistic, and logical (devoid of emotions) conclusions. Human memory is short and always needs to be refreshed.

Before proceeding ahead, it would be useful to keep in mind the salient features of the political scene in Kashmir on the eve of India's Independence. It can be summed up as follows:

A secular party, the National Conference (NC) led the freedom struggle by the citizens of J&K against their Hindu Maharaja. The Congress was closely associated with the NC and its movement for democratic rights. The Muslim League, professed champion of Muslims of the sub continent, denounced the secular democratic movement and its connection with the Congress.

The country was in the grip of massive communal riots. There were large scale riots in the Punjab, The western borders of J&K were too fragile to prevent infiltration. According to an assessment by Prime Minister Nehru, Maharaja Harisingh's army would not be able to face any border trouble, the signs of which were increasingly visible, without popular support. Obviously, the only major group that could help was the NC under Sheikh Abdullah, who was in jail alongwith his followers.

The decision of the British Govt. to partition India was announced on 3rd June 1947 the rulers of the states could make their own decision.

13.2 Maharaja Harisingh's Procrastination

The Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten visited Kashmir on 19th June 1947 to meet Maharaja Harisingh. One day before he flew to Srinagar, he issued a statement saying, "Constitutionally and legally the Indian states will be independent sovereign states on the termination of paramountcy and they will be free to decide themselves to adopt any course they like". His mission was to make Harisingh realise the gravity of the situation and act decisively. But, unfortunately, the crucial meeting between them scheduled for 22 June 1947 could not take place. Harisingh suffered a colic attack. Shortly after his return to London, Mountbatten said in a speech, "On everyone of the four days, I persisted with the advice : Ascertain the will of your people by any means and join by August 14th this year ... Had he acceded to Pakistan before 14th August 1947, the future govt. of India had allowed me to give His Highness an assurance that no objection whatever would be raised by them.". And had the Maharaja joined India, Pakistan could not object, as it did not exist" (Refer 'Time Only To Look Forward' P.69). The Viceroy returned without any success.

Mahatma Gandhi visited Kashmir on 29th July 1947 on almost the same mission without any visible success. S.M.Abdulla continued being in jail. Maharaja Harising, perhaps

frightened by Jinnah's Islam in Pakistan and Nehru's democracy in India, opted out for procrastination. S.M.Abdullah, continued to be in jail.

Maharaja Harisingh opted out for a 'Standstill Agreement' with Pakistan. Theoretically he attained his Independence on 15th August 1947 on the termination of British paramountcy. Integration of Indian States: 565 Indian states would assume sovereignty on 15th August 1947. To deal with the situation a Department of States was constituted and brought under the control of Home Minister, Sardar Patel on 5th July 1947. V.P.Menon, a confidant of the Viceroy, became the Secretary of States. The stated objective of the States Department was to supervise the integration of the Indian States with the emerging Indian Union.

V.P.Menon's book 'Story of Integration of Indian States' gives interesting, at times thrilling accounts of the integration stories of some States. Most of the princes signed the Instrument of Accession willingly, some had to be persuaded, and some coerced. Typical among the reluctant were the Nawab of Bhopal, Dewan of Travancore and Maharaja Hanwant Singh of Jodhpur. The last mentioned almost worked out a deal with Jinnah for acceding to adjoining Pakistan, in spite of overwhelming Hindu majority of the state. All these were persuaded to join India. However, Hyderabad, Kashmir and Junagarh remained undecided.

13.3 Kashmir ignored

No effort was made to persuade, much less to pressurise or coerce Harisingh to accede to the emerging Indian Union. Hadson writes in the 'Great Divide': "The States Ministry of the Govt. of India was meanwhile strictly passive. Kashmir was deliberately omitted from a committee of States representative called by Pre-Independent States Department to discuss the terms of accession, though Hyderabad was included".

V.P.Menon writes in his book 'The story of Integration of Indian States': "... We left the State (Kashmir) alone. We did not ask the Maharaja to accede, though at a time (after partition) as a result of Red-Cliffe Award, the State had become connected by road with India. Owing to the composition of population, the State had its own peculiar problems. Moreover, our hands were full and, if truth be told, I for one had simply no time to think of Kashmir".

13.4 What does this attitude suggest ?

1. Was India not interested in integrating 3rd biggest State in spite of its strategic importance?
2. Was the States Ministry convinced that the composition of its population did not warrant any efforts to persuade the Maharaja to accede to India, in spite of NC factor?
3. Whatever it is, the fact remains that no pressure was brought upon Harisingh to take S.M.Abdullah into confidence to take a decisive step for three weeks from the date of his release till 22nd October 1947 when Kashmir was raided by tribals backed and organised by Pakistan army.

13.5 Release of Abdullah - Time Lost

Meanwhile the situation on Kashmir borders worsened. Alarmed by reports, PM Nehru, on 27 Sept. 1947 wrote a long and well-argued letter to the Minister of States (S.Patel) saying "I rather doubt if Maharaja and his State forces can meet the situation by themselves without popular help. Obviously only major group that can side with them is the NC under Sheikh Abdullah's leadership... we have definitely great asset in NC... Sheikh Abdulla has repeatedly given assurance of wishing to cooperate and of being opposed to Pakistan".

S.M.Abdullah was released on 29 Sept.1947 and on 4th October he said, ...I never believed in the Pak slogan... Pandit Nehru is my best friend and I hold Gandhiji in real reverence".

Yet for three weeks between 29 Sept 1947 upto 22 Oct. 1947 when Kashmir was raided by Pak backed armed tribals, nothing was done to put pressure on Harisingh to take Sheikh Abdullah into confidence and take a firm decision.

However, Sheikh Abdullah, perhaps realising the urgency took a bold step. He sent a delegation led by G.M.Sadiq to Pakistan with a three point proposal: 1) Pakistan should not precipitate a decision upon them. 2) Give them (Kashmir) time and support the freedom movement in Kashmir and; 3) recognise the democratic right of the people to decide their future. Sadiq went to Pakistan twice, without any success.

Even on 31 October 1947 (after accession) Sheikh Abdulah sent a signal of Peace to Pakistan. He said "...I request Mr.Jinnah to accept the democratic principle of the sovereignty of the people of our State, including as it does 78% of Muslims whose free and unhampered choice must count in the matter of final expression" - (Hindustan Times 2 November 1947).

Pakistan with an eye on Hyderabad and Junagarh would not accept it. Mr.Jinnah is reported to have commented, "Kashmir is in my pocket".

13.6 Accession to India

The armed raid on 22 October 1947 precipitated the matter. Kashmir could not resist the massive raid. Death and destruction were unleashed. The state administration almost collapsed. India could not send any help unless J&K had acceded to India. On 26 October 1947 Maharaja Harisingh signed the Instrument of Accession to India, endorsed by Sheikh Abdullah. Accepting the accession, the Governor General Mountbatten wrote in a separate letter, ".....In consistence with the policy of the Govt.... it is, my governments wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored and soil cleared of the invader, the question of State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people".

Why had India put a condition when it was not needed under the Independence Act? Explaining the Indian stand and action, Mountbatten speaking to the Editor of Statesman on 28 October 1947 said "You cannot build a nation on tricks Jinnah at Abbatabad had been expecting to ride in Triumph into Kashmir... India's move on Kashmir was an event of different order. Her readiness to accept a Plebiscite had been stated from the outset. The Maharaja's accession gave complete legality to the action so far taken."

It is interesting to note that legality of Kashmir's accession to India was never questioned by any power in the security council. On 4th February 1948, the U.S representative in the Security Council said: ".....with the accession of J&K to India, his (Maharaja's) foreign sovereignty went to India, and that is how India happens to be here as a petitioner".

13.7 Why Conditional?

Was this offer of reference to people's opinion unique in the case of Kashmir? If not, what was the evolution of this policy? A 'policy' should be distinguished from a constitutional provision. The former is usually a mechanism to deal with an evolving situation and is often subject to modification and amendment to suit the time of its implementation.

The evolution of the policy: A close study of the historical development vis-à-vis the integration will show that;

Most of the states acceded to India on agreed conditions either willingly or as a result of persuasion / negotiation without any such condition for ratification. In all such cases the ruler exercised his powers of decision conferred upon him after the termination of British paramountcy. But unfortunately, three States Junagarh, J&K and Hyderabad remained undecided till 15 August 1947 and beyond.

Incidentally all the three had more or less similar problem. The rulers and the majority of the ruled did not belong to the same religion.

Junagarh presented the first opportunity to the Govt. of India to evolve a policy to deal with the delinquent who did not act judiciously and timely. Let us examine the sequence of events related to Junagarh :

1. On 15 August 1947, the Nawab announced his decision to accede to Pakistan.
2. On 21 August 1947, V.P. Menon, asked Pakistan to clarify her policy, keeping in view that a) Junagarh had no geographical continuity with Pakistan b) the majority of people were Hindus and c) peoples consultation was necessary.
3. On 12 Sept. 1947, Nehru sent a written message to Pakistan through Lord Ismay, Mountbatten's chief of staff proposing to accept people's verdict.
4. On 13 Sept. 1947, Pakistan accepted the accession of Junagarh
5. India refused to accept the validity of the accession, but Mountbatten regarded it legally valid, though politically and morally incorrect.
6. On 17 Sept. 1947, India sent V.P. Menon to Junagarh to advise the Nawab to accept the proposal for reference to the people.
7. Respecting Mountbatten's views, India resisted the temptation of an armed intervention.
8. On 25 Sept. 1947, Pak turned down India's proposal for a referendum, stating "this was a matter between the Nawab and his subjects".
9. On Sept 30, 1947, the Prime Minister proposed in the newly constituted Defence Committee, "Wherever there is a dispute in regard to any territory, the matter should be decided by referendum / plebiscite.... We accept the decision whatever may be". (Hudson - Great Divide) The decision was immediately conveyed to Pakistan.
10. Next day Nehru made a public announcement of this decision .
11. In a meeting of Joint Defence Council attended by Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan,

Mountbatten said that the decision of the Defence committee of India, referred to above (item no.9) would apply not only to Junagarh but to other areas as well.

12. Liaquat Ali Khan made no comment. Was it because of Junagarh and Hyderabad? Or, was it because of Pakistan's lack of confidence to win in S.M.Abdullah's Kashmir ?

13. Pakistan chose to insist on the ruler's prerogatives in the case of Junagarh and Hyderabad. She maintained her conspicuous silence regarding Kashmir.

14. After meeting Liaquat Ali Khan on 16 October 1947, Mountbatten reported that Pakistan was agreeable to a plebiscite, but the Pak Prime Minister backed out saying it was a misunderstanding.

15. India held a plebiscite in Junagarh on 20 Feb. 1948. Pakistan did not cooperate.

India remained committed to her declared policy which was stated in his letter by the Governor General on 26 Oct 1947 while accepting the accession of J&K.

13.8 India's efforts and Pakistan's reaction

The Govt. of India showed its seriousness about the commitment right from the start, but unfortunately failed to persuade Pakistan to accept the offer. The following are some instances;

1. On Nov. 1, 1947 Mountbatten conveyed to Mr.Jinnah the commitment of the Govt. of India, Mr.Jinnah suggested a Round Table conference of Mountbatten, Nehru, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Harisingh and Sheikh M Abdullah. The last two had no locus standi after accession.

2. Without prior sanction of the cabinet, Mountbatten suggested to Mr.Jinnah to hold a plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nation. Jinnah rejected it and suggested a plebiscite under the supervision of Mountbatten and Jinnah himself.

On 2 Nov 1947, Nehru in a broadcast said, "...In Kashmir, India is willing to hold a referendum under some such international authority as that of the United Nations".

(V.P.Menon says that no Indian Minister objected)

3. On 25 Nov 1947 speaking in Parliament (reading from a prepared statement, while both Patel and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee were present) Nehru said, "...we have suggested that when the people are given a chance in future, this should be done under the supervision of an impartial tribunal such as the United Nations Organisation".

A meeting of Nehru and Liaquat was arranged by Mountbatten at 4.00 p.m. on 26 Nov.

1947. A series of meetings at lower level took place to discuss disengagement. Liaquat Ali Khan returned to Pakistan ahead of his delegation's departure. He issued a statement that Pakistan would never give up Kashmir. Fresh batches of raiders were sent to Kashmir and ghastly atrocities by the raiders were reported. Mountbatten's effort failed once again.

13.9 United Nations Efforts

The United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) comprising representatives of Czechoslovakia, Argentina, Belgium and Colombia and the United States, arrived in Karachi on 5 July 1948. On 9 July 1948 the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Sir Zaffarullah Khan informed the commission that three brigades of Pakistani army had been operating in Kashmir. When the commission arrived in New Delhi, Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, the Secretary General of External Ministry reacted sharply and pleaded that the situation had

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changed since the commission was formed in April 1948. "Pakistan should be named an aggressor and condemned", was the Indian demand. However, after much negotiations the UNCIP passed a resolution on 13 Aug 1948. The basic resolution had three parts; Part one relates to cease fire; Part two made it incumbent upon Pakistan to withdraw all forces, regular and irregular, while accepting that India could retain sufficient forces for the security of the state including the observance of law and order. Part three provided as follows;



14.0 INDO-PAK WAR - PART IV

14.1 Implications

Before tracing the events leading to cease fire on 1 January 1949, let us bear in mind the implications of the resolution;

1. Pakistan was an aggressor,
2. It was Pakistan's responsibility to withdraw the irregulars besides her regular troops,
3. India had the constitutional and legal right to look after the security of the state, while Pakistan had no locus standi,
4. The modalities of a reference to the people were subject to the acceptance by the two Governments, and
5. That implementation of part three would follow that of the parts one and two.

It may be mentioned that India accepted the resolution only after receiving categorical assurance on 25 Aug 1948 to the effect:

1. That India would have to maintain sufficient forces in the state to meet the threat of external aggressions as well internal order;
2. That the sovereignty of the state extended to its entire territory and that there would be no recognition of the so called "Azad Kashmir";
3. That Pakistan did not have any claim to have any part in a plebiscite, should it be decided to seek a solution of the future of the state by means of a plebiscite.

Pakistan sent a formal reply with a "formidable list of objections" aimed at securing absolute equality with India. The commission was prepared to accept some demands, but Pakistan's formal reply sent on 6 Sept. 1948 was considered as her rejection. The commission hoped that Pakistan would reconsider.

14.2 Supplementary Proposal

Then started a series of Anglo-Pakistan moves aimed at securing an unconditional cease fire. The United States opposed it.

On 17 Nov. 1948 Liaquat Ali Khan sought security council's help for an early cease fire. Meanwhile India secured a written assurance from the UNCIP that she (India) could not be bound by the agreement if Pakistan failed to implement her obligation under 13 August 1948 resolution.

UNCIP also agreed that if the plebiscite administrator found the method of plebiscite impracticable, other methods could be discussed only after 1 and 2 parts of the resolution were implemented to the satisfaction of the UNCIP. India accepted the supplementary proposals in the light of the assurances on 23 Dec 1948. The cease fire came into effect from midnight on 1 Jan 1949.

The first part of the resolution was implemented and cease fire came into force. Cease fire line was demarcated. The second part remains to be implemented yet. Third part could not be considered. The stalemate continued, those who demand the enforcement of U.N. resolution for holding a plebiscite ignore the hurdle in its implementation.

14.3 Nehru's Liberal offer

In spite of non-fulfillment of provisions of the resolution by Pakistan, Nehru, the idealist that he was, made a bold and generous offer to Pakistan within a fortnight of the arrest of S.M. Abdulla on 9 August 1953.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali came to India on an official visit. Nehru suggested;

1. A plebiscite administrator could be named by April 1954.
2. Voting could be done in the whole state rather than separate Hindu or Muslim regions and if it meant the loss of the whole valley, he was prepared for it.
3. The only condition Nehru placed was that the American U.N. nominee Admiral Nimitz be replaced by someone from a smaller country. The offer was confirmed in a letter to Mohammad Ali on 6 Sept 1953. Bakshi Ghulam Mohamad, who had succeeded Abdullah as Prime Minister of J&K, threatened to resign. Nehru calmed him with a letter on 18 Aug 1953 saying; "...we have to choose a path which not only promises the greatest advantage but is dignified with our general policy".

Pakistan made Admiral Nimitz an issue. Nehru withdrew the offer as soon as Pakistan announced her military alliance with the United States. An opportunity was lost.

14.4 Ratification of Accession

In 1951, the Kashmir Constituent Assembly (C.A) was convened with a four point objective:

1. To decide the future of monarchy
2. To decide about the compensation to land lords.
3. To decide about the accession of Kashmir.
4. To frame a Constitution for the State.

Speaking to the elected members of the C.A., Sheikh Abdullah said, "...Today is the day of destiny that comes once in a life time of a nation. Decide what you want – India, Pakistan or Independence". The constituent assembly abolished monarchy, gave land to tillers without any compensation to the landlords, confirmed accession of Kashmir to India and passed a Constitution. The constitution of Kashmir came into force on 26 Jan 1957. The recommendations of the C.A. had already been incorporated in the Indian Constitution on 14 May 1954 by a Presidential Order.

India holds that the accession of Kashmir is legally and morally a closed chapter. She does not accept the view that the C.A's decision is not valid on two accounts; 1. The other decisions of the C.A. have been welcomed, 2. The agreements with UNCIP envisaged other

methods, if holding a Plebiscite was not possible. Non co-operation by Pakistan, even in 1953 – 54 made it necessary to close the chapter.

14.5 Pakistan's Priority

Pakistan seemed to have believed in forcible capture of the state. After Nehru's death in 1964, Pakistan made a secret plan of taking Kashmir by force. She sent armed infiltrators into the valley in August 1965. Pak army backed it.

Nehru informed the parliament in August 1952 "that any further aggression or attack or military operation in regard to Kashmir, if such takes by the otherside, that would mean an all out war not only in Kashmir, but elsewhere too". Lal Bahadur Shastri implemented this policy in 1965. The policy has not changed yet. And 1971 conflict is history. Pakistan failed to take Kashmir by force.

14.6 Conclusion

A. The catastrophe that Kashmir has been facing could have been avoided:

1. If Maharaja Harisingh had acceded to either Dominion before 15 August 1947;
2. If Pakistan had considered favourably the proposal of N.C. conveyed by G.M.Sadiq, and later had Mr. Jinnah responded sympathetically to S.M.Abdulah's" signal of peace of 31st Oct 1947.
3. If tribal raid in Oct 1947 had not taken place and forced the Maharaja to accede to India.
4. If the Pakistan PM had accepted Nehru's offer made in August/September 1953 even when Pakistan could not implement in toto the August 13 resolution. But perhaps Pakistan believed (may be, still believes) in the use of force and Harisingh thought of Independence - a reckless thought.

B. As already stated the UNCIP was told in Karachi on 9 July 1948 that Pakistan regular army was fighting in Kashmir. Apart from asking for the condemnation of Pakistan, Sir G.S.Bajpai pointed out, ".... If Pakistan wanted a decision by force, and the decision went against Pakistan, it could not invoke the machinery of the United Nations to obtain what it had failed to secure by its chosen weapon of force". (Ref Korbel Joset : Danger in Kashmir Page 124)

The External Affairs Ministry mandarins cannot afford to ignore this prophetic statement.

The need of the hour (2004) is to be a realist and to think a hundred times about the demand of a plebiscite recognising the complexities of the situation as a result of non fulfillment of conditions laid in the Part two of the resolution, and may never be. Therefore, the present emphasis on finding a solution keeping in view the existing situation. The aim has to be to ensure peace and progress of the people and the region.

14.7 References

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15.0 INDO-PAK WAR 1947-48

15.1 Facts: Less Known but Revealing

"The airlift of an Indian battalion to Srinagar on 27 Oct 1947, undertaken against dissuading caution voiced by Army chiefs (all Britishers) actively supported by Mountbatten."

15.2 26th October 1947

Kashmir's accession to India was signed by the Maharaja and accepted by the Government of India. A request by the commanding officer of the state forces to airlift an Indian infantry battalion was discussed in a meeting of the Defence Committee. Lord Mountbatten presided over the meeting which was attended by the services chiefs (all Britishers), the Prime Minister Nehru, Home Minister Sardar Patel, Defence Minister S. Baldev Singh and others. The minutes of the meeting reveal that the service chiefs tried to dissuade the ministers from undertaking an airlift as it 'involved great risks and dangers'. They listed these dangers; Prime Minister Nehru countered each. Briefly they were:

1. Service Chiefs: A single battalion would be inadequate if a general uprising were to break in Kashmir.

P.M. Nehru held general populace would support the National Conference and hence the fear for an uprising was imaginary.

2. Service Chiefs: The battalion could not be assured of supplies after its initial induction.

P.M. Nehru: The road from Jammu to Srinagar would remain open till the end of November, at least and possibly for 2-3 weeks of December.

3. Service Chiefs: The battalion would be without its motor transport.

P.M. Nehru: Local transport would be available on voluntary basis to begin with.

4. Air Marshal Elmhurst stated that RIAF could provide only four aircrafts for transport.

Nehru supported by Sardar Patel assured that nine civil aircrafts available in the country engaged in transporting refugees, would offer services if approached. Two trips by each of the 13 aircrafts a day would be able to fly in the whole battalion.

5. Elmhurst repeated his opinion that the Srinagar airfield would fall within 36 hours.

V.P. Menon, who had visited Srinagar a day earlier in the company of Airforce officers disagreed. The ministers agreed with Menon.

6. Finally, Lockhart asked, "Is Kashmir vital to India?"

"Yes, Kashmir is vital to the very existence of India," said both Nehru and Patel.

The Defence Committee decided to airlift an Indian Infantry battalion to Srinagar early next morning on 27 Oct. 1947.

Sardar Patel made a radio broadcast appealing for help from the owners of civil aircrafts.

Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ranjit Rai, the first Indian battalion, the Sikh Regiment (1 Sikh) then deployed at Gurgaon, was ordered to reach Safdarjung Airport. At half past

nine on 27 Oct 1947, the first aircraft landed at Srinagar with others following at periodic intervals, the initial body of 1 Sikh was in position in the airfield area by midday.

Lt.Col. Rai faced a number of grave problems. Chief among them was the non-availability of any means of communication. There was no telephone service or wireless. Also there was no army transport.

As the operation (airlift) was in progress, Lord Mountbatten, even with his vast experience as Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in South East Asia during the World War II, wrote to Sardar Patel: *"I must remind you that the risk is great and chances of keeping the raiders out of Srinagar are not too good."* The raiders reached Baramulla almost the same time i.e. 10 A.M. on the 27th Oct 1947.

15.3 People's Efforts

The arrival of 1 Sikh was greeted with jubilation. Volunteers of the National Militia under the leadership of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad were active in assisting civil administration which had collapsed. The Emergency Administration set up under Sheikh Abdullah whole heartedly cooperated with the Indian Soldiers. Civilian transport was provided along with drivers. There was no uprising as feared by the Service Chiefs. Nor did the battalion suffer for want of motor transport. Even on the 20th November 1947, when the Indian Army under Brig. Sen attempted to reach poonch from Uri via Hajipir pass, the army convoy consisting of military vehicles of different description included 60 civil vehicles driven by local drivers. Unfortunately this mission failed, but that is a different issue.

It is well known that volunteers of National Conference rendered a valuable service to the Indian Army by collecting information of the movements of the raiders. By mistake two such volunteers became victims of firing by a soldier on duty guarding a post near Srinagar at night. Maqbool Sherwani was detected on such a mission. On 1st Nov. 1947, Col. L.P. Sen, with a temporary rank of a Brigadier was asked to head the (161 infantry) Brigade. Before flying to Srinagar Mahatma Gandhi wanted the Brigadier to apprise him of the latest situation. After listening to the Brigadier, Mahatma said, " Wars are a curse to Humanity They bring nothing but suffering and destruction." Confused, the soldier who was going to fight said, "What do I do in Kashmir?" Mahatma Gandhi said, " You are going in to protect innocent people, and to save them from suffering and their property from destruction. *To achieve that you must make full use of every means at your disposal."*

15.4 Air Field Escapes Assault

3 Nov. 1947- 9.30 AM. Major Soomnath Sharma of 4 Kumaon reports that his command is in position on a hill near Badgam. At 12.30 PM the Major reports that Captain Wood is back after conducting an uneventful patrol up to Magam. Enemy not seen anywhere. At 1 PM Maj. Soomnath starts thinning his men. At 2 PM, the Major asks permission to withdraw, but is asked to wait till 3 PM.

At 2.35 PM he speaks on wireless. "My men are facing heavy firing from residential houses. I desist from firing back lest civilians are hurt." After 2 minutes, he adds, "A large force of enemy has emerged from the west, firing from automatic weapons and mortars". In a minute, he is silenced forever. His men face the enemy bravely, but are outnumbered in

manpower and weapons. (Maj. Soomnath was posthumously awarded the first Param Vir Chakra.)

Chaos breaks out at the Airport, which is estimated to be within the firing range from the hill feature occupied by the Indians under Maj. Sharma. Aerial reconnaissance confirms the huge presence of raiders sheltered by the ruggedness of the terrain.

Mysteriously, the enemy instead of heading towards the Airport or taking over the hill feature, withdrew towards Baramulla.

15.5 Battle of Shallateng - Unplanned vital help

On 5th November defence of Srinagar was planned. Nodal points on the outskirts of the city occupied. No reserves were left, even after withdrawing a part of the forces from the Airfield and also Pattan. Reinforcement consisting of two battalions of infantry, one squadron of armoured cars and a battery of field artillery was expected to arrive by 7th November. An offensive was planned for 10 November. The raiders scattered all over headed for Baramulla. With no Indian soldiers at Pattan, road up to Srinagar was wide open for the vehicles of the raiders.

The movement of the reinforcement convey was slowed at Ramban Bridge, which allowed only one vehicle or armoured car to pass at a time and that too extremely slowly. Leaving the main convoy behind, Maj. Rikhy brought with him four armoured cars and some rifle men reached Srinagar late at night on the 6th November. The armoured cars needed immediate servicing. There were no technicians and workshop service. With the help of the local mechanics two of the armoured cars became serviceable by the dawn of 7th Nov 1947. Lt. David was asked to conduct a reconnaissance mission to Bandipora via Gandherbal, taking an armoured car and a contingent of Riflemen. In absence of a map, a local guide would put him on the road. He started from Srinagar before 7 A.M. There was no indication of the raiders around. At 7.30 A.M. the Indian troops came under heavy automotive fire. The air force was alerted and its reconnaissance revealed a large force right in front of the Indian positions. The gap between the two opposite forces was too narrow to allow an aerial action. Also more than 150 buses were standing at a little distance away. Lt. David was asked to cross over to Sumbal using an unmetalled road and crossing a wooden bridge near by. With great difficulty he succeeded in crossing the bridge after removing its railings. It took him more than 20 minutes to cross a single car. Once on the Sumbal-Srinagar road, Lt. David was asked to march towards Shallateng, driving at the rear of the raiders. He was cautioned not to fire or provoke the raiders, but pose as if he was leading a part of the attacking forces. Raising pro-Pakistani slogans, the Indian riflemen (fortunately there was no Sikh) reached the fork where the Sumbal-Srinagar road meets the Srinagar-Baramulla road. The raiders, thinking it to be of Pakistan, followed it. When they were drawn out of their trenches, the armoured car rotated the gun and fired at them. The Indian soldiers posted at the strategic points also opened fire. Total confusion broke out. The battle of Shallateng was decisive. Srinagar was saved. 472 dead bodies were picked up on the battlefield of Shallateng, 146 bodies on Shallateng-Baramulla road, 138 buses and trucks etc. were captured and handed over to the Emergency Administration. Brig. Sen (Later

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Major General) wonders to think of the fate of Srinagar without the help of the armoured car.

Call it coincidence, chance, superior strategy by the victor or the inferior strategy of the vanquished, by the Chivalry of the Indians or the Cowardice of the raiders, by the good luck of the Kashmiri's or by the popular belief of intervention of some spiritual soul, some mysteries and inexplicable developments seemed to have saved both the Airfield and Srinagar.

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16.0 AGENDA FOR SOCIAL REFORM AND ITS SOME FORE-RUNNERS

The All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) has issued a document entitled 'An Agenda for Social Reform' (Milchar Nov-Dec 2004 issue). The authors have identified some 'social ills' that need urgent attention of the community. The issues raised and suggestive changes deserve serious thought. It might be useful to keep in mind successes and failures in the past to draw guidance from them.

16.1 At Home

Saligram Koul and his brother succeeded in changing certain customs, especially cuisine at Baraat Reception from non-vegetarian to vegetarian by their aggressive leadership helped by a band of young men. Kashyap Bandhu succeeded in bringing some changes in our social practices especially in the dress code of women by his charismatic personality, his oration, his power of pen and above all, his organising capacity which ensured to him the support of community youth.

The efforts of some of the leaders of Parmeshwari agitation to enforce their diktat for social reform failed for lack of popular support, for unrealistic comments, and above all, loss of faith in the leadership and non-cooperation of certain elitist sections.

16.2 In Exile

The community has been in exile in varying numbers for many centuries. In the 19th century and in the beginning of the 20th century, according to official estimates, nearly 5000 Kashmiri Pandits were living in exile in northern India at Delhi, Lucknow, Lahore, Amritsar, Agra and various places in Rajasthan and Punjab. Mostly belonging to service class, they had no political problems.

Through marriages within the community, they had maintained a network of relationship to maintain their individuality. They had adhered to their customs, rites and rituals. With the passage of time, their social life came under certain pressures. Their certain caste rules, their taboos and their certain social values faced challenges from environment especially after the introduction of English education in 1820s.

The first inter-caste marriage among KPs took place in 1905 (Nehru had migrated in 1716). A few examples of social pressure will be instructive:

Mohan Lal Kashmiri's some ancestor was granted an estate worth 20 lakhs per year by the Mughal emperor. After the British took over the Delhi administration, all belongings of Mohan Lal's father were snatched from him in 1824. He was reduced to utter poverty. Mohan Lal, who had had traditional education in Persian was the first Kashmiri to join the English Class of Delhi College. He was a bright student. He attained proficiency in the language. He was invited to join Alexander Burne's Mission to Afghanistan, Central Asia, Iran etc. He agreed. But he was accused of flouting caste rule which forbade a KP from visiting a land inhabited and ruled by Muslims. On his return, he was excommunicated and ostracised. He even wrote to the secretary to government for help as he would not like to be disowned by his community. He was destined to play a significant role in Anglo-Afghan

war (1836-1842). On his return, he was honoured by the British government, but not pardoned by his biradari. He finally got converted to Islam.

To avoid similar situation, Sheo Narain 'Bahar' of Lucknow started a journal 'Marasla Kashmir' in Urdu and Persian in 1872 with the sole aim of creating awareness against superstitions. He soon found that older generation was hard to change, but youth was more malleable. He founded an Association to 'lift Kashmiris from fallen state'.

Himself an Education Officer, he was joined by two college teachers. By 1881, this association was developed into 'Kashmir National Club' (KNC). Its membership was restricted to college students, aim being to find willing workers needed to spread the message and convince the people to welcome reforms. By 1891, the movement reached Punjab and the Club was upgraded to accommodate members from Punjab and Rajasthan. The Club came to be known as 'Kashmiri Pandit National Club (KPNC). They did commendable work.

Thus we see that it took nearly twenty years (1872-1892) for the determined pioneer of Social Reform to create a sizeable sympathisers, ready to accept certain changes. Their achievements included i) Reduction in marriage expenses and opening an Education Fund; ii) Promotion of girls' education; iii) Stoppage of child marriage; iv) Opening a KP Boarding House at Lahore.

However, the movement faced a big challenge in 1884, when Bishen Narain Dar of Lucknow decided to go to England for higher studies, flouting the caste rule forbidding a KP to take to sea voyage.

Bishen Narain declared that he would not undertake Prayaschit, a ceremony prescribed for the radicals violating caste rules. He was encouraged by some members of KNC, though on return he had to undergo Prayaschit twice, reluctantly of course. He was opposed by Sanatan Dharm members.

Those who favoured him were termed Bishen Sabhaites. In a short time, the entire biradari was vertically split, threatening the unity of the entire community. Some intellectuals worked behind the scene. M.L.Nehru floated Sath Sabha, a neutral body. In 1890, the two warring Sabhas were made to jointly found National Social Conference in Lucknow. The differences still persisted. In 1903, Kailash Nath Katju started a bilingual monthly journal in Urdu and Hindi called 'Darpan'.

It is interesting to note the objectives of the publication:

i) to create awareness of social problems; ii) to encourage debate; iii) to involve women in decision taking.

It was laid down that the subject matter of write-ups on social problems would be the same in the two languages and that the articles would be accepted for publication on the basis of its relevant content, not on its literary value only. Finally, the two groups decided to reform society jointly, working under one banner.

What guidance do these instances give to those who aspire to reform society? I would venture to draw the following:

1. Reforms must be acceptable to all. Unity is a pre-requisite.
2. Leaders must eschew politics.
3. New Rules/Codes/Practices should be evolved, not imposed.
4. Realism not idealism should guide thinking.
5. Women and youth should be involved at all stages.

Note: The 'Agenda for Social Reform' by AIKS is a visionary document. A blue print of action is hoped for.



17.0 BUS 2005

Kashmir is on the crossroads of her destiny. Trans LOC Bus service has been started. Let us hope this momentous event is remembered as one bringing good luck. In the past certain events have proved that destiny has helped Kashmir in the long run.

I have to draw the attention of the readers to the following events, which played momentous role:

1. Muslim Conference was conceived in 1931. Speaking in its first session in 1932, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah said that they needed to carry non-Muslims along for achieving their political goal. The orthodox elements lead by Mirwaiz left the organisation. This gave opportunity to S.M.Abdullah to use mosques to propagate his ideas successfully.
 2. Muslim Conference (MC) gave a call to observe 19th May 1936 as Responsible Government Day. Many Sikhs and Hindus joined it, ignoring that MC was organizing it.
 3. In 1939, MC was changed to National Conference (NC). Ghulam Abbas and others from Jammu (Mirpur) decided to leave the party. Being close to Pakistan they were under greater influence of Muslim League. If they had stayed back, could have persuaded others to join ML.
 4. Jawahar Lal Nehru visited Kashmir in 1940 on a private visit. S M Abdullah used the opportunity of playing host and came very close to Nehru.
 5. In 1944, NC issued a document called Naya Kashmir. It promised an era of prosperity, progress and free from the evils of feudalistic regime. People were captivated.
 - 6(a). In July 1944, Jinnah visited Kashmir with a view of winning support to his two-nation theory and Pakistan Demand. Without realising the psyche of Kashmir, he used the reactionary and communal platform of MC at Jamia Masjid to downgrade the National Conference leaders. He had to face humiliation at Baramulla where he was not even allowed to speak. Kashmiris rejected the two nation theory.
 - 6(b). In autumn of 1944 Veer Savarkar visited Kashmir and offered help to train and arm some youth if Mahasabha branches were opened. SN Fotedar, KP leader declined the offer stating that KP were opposed to both Muslim and Hindu fundamentalism.
- If Jinnah or Savarkar had succeeded in their mission and weaning Kashmiris from secular course, Kashmir would not have escaped the communal trouble of 1946-47 and India could not have intervened. I shudder to think of the fate of Kashmiri Pandits in 1946-47 or even during the raid of the tribals, if the Kashmiris had succumbed to Jinnah or Savarkar bait. Kashmir rejected the two nation theory.
7. The visit of INC leaders in 1945 and the reception given to them confirmed Kashmiri Muslim's faith in secularism.
 8. Nehru's support and Jinnah's opposition to NC in the wake of Quit Kashmir movement helped Kashmir to recognize friend from foe.

If the matter had not been precipitated, a negotiated decision could have been possible as NC leaders were trying for. Who knows on what terms Jinnah could have agreed? India would have no legal right to intervene.

11. All decisions were not so lucky for Kashmir. The most unfortunate was when Mountbatten succeeded in making Indian Government to refer the matter to UNO.

13. Nehru made an offer to Pak PM in 1953 (after S.M. Abdullah's arrest) to hold a plebiscite in the whole of Kashmir on the condition that American administrator was replaced by one from a small country. Pak dithered till she formed military alliance with America. India withdrew the offer. USSR used the Veto at a subsequent UNO resolution. Kashmir problem was frozen. The heat generated by the wars in 1965, 1971 and 1998 (Kargil) failed to defreeze the situation.

15. So no wars, no UNO resolution, no terrorism change the situation and solved the problem. Only one option remains to be tried: Peace to be nourished by all the concerned. The trans-border bus is a symbolic ambassador of peace. Let us pray it succeeds. Amien.

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18.0 A COMMUNITY IN EXILE

18.1 Pre-1949 Saga

Today, the entire community of Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) is living in exile, scattered all over the world, ignoring the first exodus during the rule of Sikandar, reversed by Zainul-Abidin, and the stray escapes during the cruel Afghans who believed in conversion or death, this process of slow migration atleast 400 years ago. By the end of 19th century, about 4500 KPs were living in the northern India.

All this migration was not due to religious persecution, a large number of them individually or in groups, in search of better opportunities. Akbar annexed Kashmir in 1576. Kashmir lost her independence, and Kashmiris began losing the place of their birth. Kashmir under Mughal Subhedars witnessed regular movement of officials on transfer.

The first known KP who migrated from Kashmir to take a job at Agra was one Sadanand Koul 'Gamkhar' during Akbar's rule (1576-1605). He later shifted to Delhi, where Shahjehan granted him a Mansab and Jagir. Raj Koul Nehru migrated in 1716 AD. During pre-British rule, Kashmiris concentrated to live in Delhi, Agra, Lucknow, Lahore, Rajputana, Central India. They were the seats of government and KPs belonged to service class. There is no evidence of anybody seeking undue favour. Out of home, a KP has not been a suppliant before any authority. He had confidence in his abilities. In Mughal Court, many KPs earned Mansab and Jagirs. An ancestor of Mohan Lal Kashmiri had been given a Jagir worth 20 lakh annually.

In Indian states, KP employees rose to the highest posts. Moti Lal Atal became the Dewan of Jaipur state, Jia Lal Raina that of Jasore, Bishen Lal Bhadur, a member of Council of Ministers of Bharatpur, while Sukhdev Prashad Kak became Prime Minister of Jodhpur. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had a KP finance minister.

During British rule, KPs attained spectacular success. Whenever the British govt. threw open any high post in any branch to Indian recruitment, KP was in the lead. Shambhu Nath Pandita and Bishambhar Nath Koul became the first Indian judges of Calcutta and Lahore High Courts. Bishan Narain Koul (Traffic Police Chief, Punjab) Kailash Nath Kitchloo (D.P.I., NWFP), Pran Nath Thusu (Examiner Accounts, Punjab), Ganga Ram Koul (Auditor General) and Harihar Mattoo (I.T.Commissioner, Punjab) are some prominent names in this category. Kashmiri Pandits were nominated/elected as members to Government College, Lahore (3 out of 18), to Punjab University Senate (3), to Legislative Council NWFP.

KPs did not lag behind when independent profession offered an opportunity. Journalism: Moti Lal Katju edited the first Urdu newspaper called Urdu Akbar. Malwa Akbar in Urdu, Darpan, bi-lingual Urdu/Hindi dedicated to Social Reform issues - circulation 600, all edited by KPs. Even Satri Darpan, circulation 700 in 1913 was edited by two ladies from Nehru family.

KPs took active part in local, state and national politics. They joined the main political stream. Ajudiya Nath Raina presided over the Allahabad session of Indian National Congress.

Needless to say that KP lawyers reached eminence in their profession and contributed richly to political development. The first prime minister of the free India was a Kashmiri Pandit.

What is the secret of their success?

Speaking on the subject at Srinagar in 1940, Tej Bahadur Sapru said, "They (KP migrants) carried with them keen intellect, their remarkable adaptability and character into a large competitive world." The key word seems to be 'adaptability'. This sense prevented their expertise from being obsolete.

Examples:

1. Sanskrit continued to be court language for about 100 years under Muslim rule (1339) till Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470) replaced it with Persian. KP was not taken by surprise. Srivara, a scholar in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic became Court Historian. There were enough scholars in Sanskrit and Persian to establish a translation bureau which translated into Persian the Hindu Epics.
2. Before travelling to power centres in India, a KP was deeply steeped in Indo-Persian culture, besides knowing the Persian language.
3. When in 1850's, Persian gave place to Urdu, KP had already a galaxy of Persian poets.
4. While in India, a KP arranged special teachers to teach Persian to their male children. Even they sent them to Common Madrasas.
5. When in 1820's, it became clear that English would be ultimately the official language, KPs were the first to join the English class at Delhi, Lucknow and wherever possible.

In short, KP had a keen sense to anticipate the job requirement according to the situation. Has it any relevance under present situation? Consider the question:

Suppose the Delhi Declaration or Bangalore Declaration (December 2004 by KP organisations) is accepted, or the government announces the return of normalcy, we will be happy to lose the tag of 'migrants'.

What about the admission of our youth, in absence of migrant quota?

18.2 Social Control and Reforms

1. KP in exile till 1947 had succeeded in observing a fixed set of rituals, festivals, practices, rites peculiar to the community that gave it a distinct identity. The first intercaste marriage is reported in 1905, about 300 years after Sadanand migrated during Akbar's rule (1576-1605).
2. In 1832-36, Mohan Lal Kashmiri was ex-communicated for having violated a caste-rule of travelling to Muslim countries. In spite of pleadings, he was not accepted back into the fold and got converted.
3. In 1884, another social crisis struck the biradari. Bishm Narain Dhar crossed the seas to get higher education. In spite of two prayers the biradari was not ready to pardon him. Some people sided with him. A sharp division in the biradari between Sanatan Sabhaites and Bisham Sabhaites threatened to split the Biradari. A certain intellectual Prof. P.N.Bazaz

came to his help. He organised debates, seminars etc. to discuss the matter. Initially, the group consisted of 10 students. As time advanced, their numbers increased. They issued a bilingual magazine in Urdu and Hindi. It took 20 years for them to convince people to disadvantages of following a policy of isolation. Finally the community elites like M.L.Nehru, Katju and others intervened and peace was restored in the two factions.

It is to be noted:

The biradari, so vastly scattered had a wonderful network of social contact when present day means of communication or transport were not imaginable.

18.3 Kashmiri Pandit exiles never forget their motherland

1. Poets Chakbast, Hijr, Bissmil and others were never tired of singing the praises of their Janam Bhoomi.
2. In 1892, 1903 and 1905, Kashmir faced natural calamities of fire, floods and famines. The Kashmiri Pandits in exile constituted Kashmiri Pandit National Association to organise relief in Kashmir. Moti Lal Nehru donated Rs. 1000 in 1903.
3. Kashmiri Pandits presented an address printed on satin cloth to Maharaja Partap Singh. They declared their everlasting love for their Janam Bhoomi and assured the Maharaja their dedication to their Karm Bhoomi. Even today it is true. If our Janam Bhoomi ceases to be our Karm Bhoomi, the verse can be satisfying.

18.4 Challenges

1. Identity: Usually people leaving their herths and homes forever for unknown destination lose their ancestral address, neighbourhood and natural environment. The first concern of such people is to maintain their identity.
2. Kashmiri Pandits in exile since about the end of 16th century upto independence of India in 1947 miraculously succeeded in maintaining a distinct identity though living in a mass of their co-religionist. They adhere to their own style of life. In spite of being surrounded by vast number of people belonging to their general faith of Hinduism, they succeeded in observing a fixed set up, rituals, festivals, practices, rights peculiar to their community. Thus a Kashmiri Pandit did not give up his claim of belonging to Brahmin caste though different from Brahmins elsewhere. The Kashmiri Pandit Brahmins ate meat and thus became to be known as more Muslims than Hindus but they observed other rituals following other tenants of Hinduism and were accepted as Brahmins belonging to a distinct group.
3. Scattered over a large area in the Northern India working at different centres in those distant times when communication and transport were difficult, they succeeded in maintaining distinctive characteristics throughout a long history of over 400 years. It may be noted here that the first intercaste marriage of Kashmiri Pandits took place in 1905 i.e. about 300 years after migration started. Their recorded history shows that the following efforts made it possible for them to maintain their identity.
 - a) They had wonderful system of maintaining a network of information regarding their problems and welfare.

b) In the beginning and up to 1840's, they exercised a strict social control and did not allow any person to go out of community restrictions. We see Mohan Lal Kashmiri being excommunicated in 1840's for having disobeyed the caste rule forbidding Kashmiri Pandits.

c) Kashmiri Pandits seemed to have realized that adherence to such strict rules might be harmful as times progressed. It was towards the end of 19th century that a controversy whether to allow a Kashmiri Pandit to cross the seas would be allowed was raised. The famous Bishom Narayan Dhar verses Sanatan Dharmies controversy threatened the very unity of the community. This crisis was overcome and progressive approach adopted by the efforts of a teacher who realized the need of spreading awareness and educating the mind of the orthodox. He adopted a unique method. He collected a group (less than a dozen) of young students whom he first convinced of the need of reforming the social thinking of community and later under his guidance, they organized seminars, discussions, debates etc. at various places and succeeded in publishing a Journal through the writings of which they succeeded in breaking opposition to obsolete restrictions. Kashmiri Pandits influenced various areas of social, political and educational activities in the country after 1920.

4. 1990 exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from their ancestral homes poses a great challenge. The problem of maintaining identity may be considered keeping the present situation and the possible future situation in view (Future situation is based on present trends). Concentration of Kashmiri Pandits after migration at Jammu, Delhi and some towns seem to lull the Biradhari vis-à-vis danger to identity. I personally calculate the situation in the following manner:

People belonging to my generation 65 and above may not forget their origin, traditions and ways of life. The generation next i.e. 40 plus may carry some impressions from their parents for having lived in the Valley for the first 20 years but their attention to economic problems might distract them from thinking of community traditions and generation 20 plus may have lost interest in their land of ancestors. They are more or less scattered all over the world living away from their parents and grandparents. With this lesson from history, some suggestions, details after discussion. Please check this:

There is evidently need of adopting ways of keeping the young generations of our traditions, customs, rituals, practices and make them proud of belonging to such a social group. This is an age of education and information which should be exploited. Our leadership should realize the need to keep every Kashmiri Pandit youth aware of our traditions, our peculiar practices, festivals, rituals etc. I suggest the following:

Some Central Organisation can collect and categorize our standard practices, rituals etc. information of which we wish to go down the generations.

Such information should be available in print and also Audio Visual tape. Deliberate efforts should be made to give the widest publicity to this information. For this purpose, exhibition display of video tapes or use of audio tapes can be tried. To ensure participation of younger people the modern culture of club activity should be encouraged with programmes blended with information on Kashmiri Culture. At community gatherings such as Hawan, marriages, festivals, such visuals should be exhibited that can remind the visitors of their past. In short, while no special efforts are needed to reinforce our beliefs for the elderly or middle aged but

From The Pages of History

Pandit Janki Nath Kachroo

the greatest danger to our identity will be felt when our grandchildren aged 25 plus grow up as adults and possibly in distant lands.

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19.0 PROFILE

Pandit Janki Nath Kachroo, former Principal-National School, Karan Nagar, Srinagar, Kashmir, left for heavenly abode in September 2006. Shri Kachroo was a person with vast experience who had mastered the art of teaching. On one hand he was an expert in teaching of English language and on the other hand he was excellent in teaching of Mathematics and Science. He was among the pioneers of school B'casts programmes from Radio Kashmir in the Valley. A J&K State awardee for best teacher he had carved out a special niche for himself in the educational field of the Valley.

In 1969 he was promoted to the post of headmaster. This was the beginning of modernization for the School. English medium sections were added. KG classes were started. The academic atmosphere of the school was given a new and fresh direction.

In 1972 he became principal on the retirement of Sh DN Raina, the then Principal. Under the agile leadership of Sh JN Kachroo, the school started a number of projects in order to improve the academic environment of the school. An institutional plan was framed which defined in concrete terms the goals that the school had to achieve in the coming decade. From here onwards the students of school got sufficient opportunities in exhibit their talent in co-curricular and extracurricular fields. Debate, Symposia, musical programmes, games, races, literacy competitions became integral part of the school curriculum.

Sh Kachroo had a vision and as the leader he tried to fulfil that vision. In this he was able to carry the staff with him. He got full support from the members of the staff in implementing all the new and innovative measures.

From 1982 to 1986 the school passed through a difficult and trying period. The school building was gutted in a devastating fire in October 1982. Thereafter started a period of tough struggle against odds. His able handling of the situation and negotiations with various agencies enabled the management to acquire the building and consequent reconstruction. The school got a new lease of life.

In 1986, Sh Kachroo retired from the services of the school. The management made a special mention in appreciation of his dedicated and commendable services of the school : "It gives the members of the managing committee of National School, Srinagar, immense pleasure to place on its record the appreciation for the dedicated, commendable and meritorious services rendered to the school by Sh JN Kachroo throughout his devoted and dedicated service of 40 years. His contribution to the school especially during the trying period from October 1982 deserves a special mention. His guidance and leadership as Principal of the school gave the institution a place of pride in the educational map of the state".

Sh Kachroo was associated with a number of educational activities of the Valley. He was a resource person in teaching of English and participated in a number of workshops conducted by the Extension Services Department of College of Education, Srinagar.

He was an excellent broadcaster and was associated with school B'cast programmes of Radio Kashmir. He was secretary, Kashmir Aided Educational Association for a number of years.

He was a scholarly person who believed that to be successful in life one has to be a human being. He had a keen sense of observation and analysis. He always advised us to do things creatively and differently in order to achieve excellence.

*Excerpts from: **Former Principal, National School, Srinagar, Kashmir** by MK Dhar*

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